

No. SIN/P/162/7/2012

9

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose &
INA memorial, Singapore.

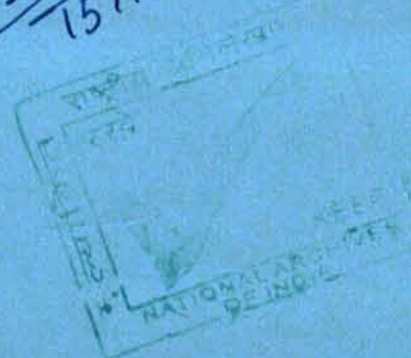
Pages - S.No
(1-59) corr.

keep

15/12/15

Other Reference

SIN/162/10/2007	INA Memorial in Singapore,
SIN/321/21/11	INA memorial
SIN/321/30/11	A 35 page Booklet on Netaji brought out by ISEAS and High Commission in 2011
SIN/327/17/12 Index no. 665	Visit by members of Netaji Subhash kranti manch to Singapore in October 2012



No. SIN/P/162/7/2012
High Commission of India
Singapore

Reference F.R which is a letter from JS(Parl.&Coord), MEA regarding Indian National Army monument at Esplanade Park and HC's directions on it.

2. In the message forwarded by JS(Parl. & Coord) from Dr. R.K. Ranjit Bhargava to EAM, it has been mentioned that Dr. Bhargava visited the INA monument at Farrer Park. However, there is no INA monument at Farrer Park and Farrer park has no relevance to INA. I had also confirmed this from Mr. Girish Kothari, one of the INA veterans in Singapore. The INA monument is at Esplanade Park.

3. I had visited the Monument at Esplanade Park. It is in a very good condition, it seems the plaque was cleaned and the inscriptions re-written. Photographs of the monument taken on 29.01.2013 may be seen at F/A.

4. A photograph taken on 26.11.2011 may be seen at F/B before the renovation. The title shows "Indian National Army Monument". The word 'Monument' has been removed while renovating, it seems. Also the map at the bottom of the monument shows more locations in the renovated one.

5. A draft letter from EAM to Dr. Bhargava as sought by JS(Parl.&Coord) is placed below for consideration.

Vtheekhat
(Vanaja K. Thekkat)
First Secretary & HOC
31.01.2013

High Commissioner

Indit

A note containing excerpts from the following files available in the Mission on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and INA and the Singapore connection, compiled by Attache (PIC) may be seen at F/Y.

- (i) SIN/162/10/2007
- ~~Also~~ (ii) SIN/321/21/11
- (iii) SIN/321/30/11
- (iv) SIN/327/17/12
- (v) SIN/P/162/7/12

Placed below is another file SIN/P/102/2/03 regarding Justice Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances of alleged disappearance of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, for information.

Umeshat
04/04/14

HC

(3)

A brief from different files relating to Shri Subhash Chandra Bose and INA memorial in Singapore may please be seen placed below.

2007 , file no. SIN/162/10/2007

Letter dt. 23/1/07 received from Lok Sabha MP, Sh Nitish Sengupta to EAM regarding re-erection of original structure of Bose in Singapore at the same site where it was destroyed by the British sometime in 1945. Fax message dated 13/2/08 from HC to JS(S) proposing response to Shri Sengupta's proposal citing various sensitivities in view of complicated history of the period and suggesting that any action would have to take into account the views of all the concerned parties, that the matter could be taken up at the first JCM meeting. That the matter has been given some thought in the larger context of an Indian heritage centre.

F-I & F-II

June 2011, File No.SIN/321/21/11

An e gram dated 20/6/11 from Dir(FSO) to HC drawing attention to a message of one Dr Ranjit Bhargava where it was claimed that memorial of INA in Singapore is not well maintained at all. Clarification issued by HC on 24/6/11 giving brief history of original INA memorial, its destruction by the British in 1945, installation of another memorial by NHB in 1995 and possibility of a proposal by IHC to make a replica of INA original memorial destroyed by the British. That the policy of High Commission staying in the background on INA related issues is a sound one.

F-III & F-IV

Nov. 2011, File No. SIN/321/30/11

Bringing of a 35 page booklet on Netaji's connection with Singapore by ISEAS and the High commission with contributions to the book by personalities including George Yeo, former FM of Singapore, Chairperson, Netaji research bureau Kolkata, former president of Singapore, chairman National Archives Board and interview of INA veterans in Singapore and Malaysia.

F-V

Feb 2012, Jan 2013, File no. SIN/P/162/7/2012

On the occasion of 70th anniversary of the battle for Singapore in Feb. 2012, several newspapers covered responses showing mixture of reactions to INA memorial in Singapore. Some individuals, mainly Chinese Singaporeans saw INA memorial in Padang in vicinity of memorials of local world war II heroes as a disrespect to those who died fighting the Japanese during the latter's occupation of Singapore. The reports in Strait Times occurred from 31/1/12 till 9/2/12. A clarification

F VI - X

4

was given by President SIA, Sh. Kesavapany (2/2/12-- **INA in Singapore was motivated not by love of Japanese imperialism but by hatred of British imperialism in India, that their alliance was tactical not strategic**) and by Thangamma Karthigesu, Director NHB (9/2/12-- **Memorial is not dedicated to INA but a WW II marker erected by NHB in commemoration of 50th anniversary of end of the war.** That several million Indian troops fought WWII as part of allied forces and a small no. in the form of INA, who saw it at that time as their mission to free India from colonial rule. That INA marker is one of 14 WW II markers that give a holistic picture of the war and its impact on Singapore. That coupled with other heritage trails and markers around island, Singaporeans can discover more about nation's shared history and heritage.

F-VI-X

A letter dated 7/2/12 from HC to Secy(East) explaining background about memory and legacy of S.C.Bose and the INA memorial in Singapore. Erection of small memorial of INA by NHB in 1995, suggestion from ISEAS for joint publication of a small booklet commemorating netaji's memory in Singapore suggesting further that this matter be hadled by PIOs in Singapore and not by GOI unless specifically asked to do.

F-XI

F-XII -
another letter
from HC to
Secy (East)
dt - 31.1.2013

Oct. 2012, File No. SIN/327/17/12

Mr Sayantan Dasgupta, a Singaporean of Indian origin informed that President and members of India based organization Netaji Subhash Kranti Manch would make pilgrimage visit to Singapore in October 2012 for 3 days to commemorate memory of foundation day of provisional govt. of Azad Hind on 21/10/43. Seeking assistance of the High Commission to organize small get together for community members in Singapore so that they may meet family members of Netaji and family members of Sardar Bhagat Singh and some prominent INA members. After consulting Ambassador Kesavapany, HC informed JS(S), copy to Secy(East) in September 20, 2012 that given the sensitivity of the issue in Singapore, a low-key gathering could be hosted by the Singapore Indian Association and visit to site may be undertaken by the group on its own rather than making it a high profile event. The members of the group visited as scheduled, were well attended and hosted by High Commissioner. The President of the Association thanked HC for hosting, showing respect to Bose, commemorating historical event, highlighting activities, places and events related to Netaji on 14/12/12.

H/C

Uthahat

Brent
3/4/14

From: Bharti S.Bhatnagar <admin@hcisingapore.org>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2014 2:17 PM
To: Sunil Mehdiretta (sunil.mehdiretta@iccrindia.net)
Cc: dhc.singapore@mea.gov.in; 'Paramita Tripathi'; 'Babu Paul'
Subject: busts and statue for IHC, Singapore
Attachments: attachment-A.docx

To: Shri Sunil Mehdiretta,
Director(C&S), ICCR

Dear Shri Mehdiretta,

Kindly refer to your message dated May 22, 2014 on the above subject received by the Mission on June 5, 2014. Itemwise reply to the queries raised in your message is furnished below:

- a. Size of the bust: Indian Heritage Centre has requested for dimensions such as the **height with or without pedestal** of the three busts and **width from shoulder to shoulder in Centimeters** of each of the three busts (Periyar, Nehruji and Bose). Similarly height and width of Gandhiji's statue may be also indicated. Images of the busts and statue (of Gandhiji) may also please be provided.
- b. The busts and the statue will be placed in Indian Heritage Centre located in Little India Heritage district. It will be a four-storey building with five permanent galleries, small museum facilities, activity spaces and a visitor centre. The galleries will be spread across two levels. The requested statue/busts will be in the Gallery on "Social & Political Awakening of Indians in Singapore and Malaya". Details of location may be seen at Attachment-A.
- c. Indian Heritage Centre is part of the National Heritage Board which is an agency of the Singapore Government. All permissions and clearances in Singapore will be processed by the Centre.
- d. Bronze busts to be installed indoors as mentioned above in (b).
- E & f.

IHC has acknowledged that all local costs from the port in Singapore to IHC including custom clearance can be done by IHC including

maintenance as it will be part of the permanent gallery and not outdoors.

g. Specific date for unveiling of busts/statue—The request for busts and the statue has been made by Indian Heritage Centre which is being set

up in Singapore with the support of National Heritage Board of Singapore to showcase influence and contribution of Indians and South Asian

Community to Singapore. The Centre is due to open in 2015. The IHC has requested for the statue/busts to be installed by Dec. 2014. Unveiling ceremony will be worked out by the Mission with IHC.

Regards,

Bharti S.Bhatnagar
Attache (PIC)

High Commission of India
31 Grange Road, Singapore - 239702
Telephone: +65-62382516 (Off.)
E-mail: admin@hcisingapore.org

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6

Paramita Tripathi

From: Paramita Tripathi <dhc.singapore@mea.gov.in>
Sent: Tuesday, 10 June, 2014 5:34 PM
To: 'Gauri KRISHNAN (NHB)'
Cc: 'Bharti S.Bhatnagar'
Subject: RE: RE: Bust References

Pls. keep copies of all IHC bust related papers in IHC file and this file and

cross-link the two for reference.

AH (PIC)

Pys 11/6
⑦

Dear Dr Krishnan,

Reference IHC's request for statue/busts of Indian leaders. For the bust of Netaji, the following information would be appreciated:

- (a) Material – Bronze (kindly confirm)
- (b) Size - available sizes are 42" or 36" or 32" (kindly specify)
- (c) Location – the exact location of the bust in the IHC along with layout plan, including lighting, etc.

Usually, when a statue/bust is given, we bear the costs on airfreight & insurance up to the first port of entry (airport/port) in the receiving country. May kindly confirm that all permissions related to the bust, customs clearances, transportation of the bust from airport, etc., besides construction & installation of the pedestal and the plaque, proper maintenance, such as regular cleaning and polishing, will be done/borne by IHC.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards.

Paramita

From: Paramita Tripathi [mailto:dhc@hcsingapore.org]
Sent: Thursday, 22 May, 2014 4:37 PM
To: 'Gauri KRISHNAN (NHB)'
Cc: 'PS to DHC'; 'Bharti S.Bhatnagar'
Subject: RE: RE: Bust References

Dear Dr Krishnan,

Thanks for the specs. Would you kindly send the locations identified for these statues/busts? An image or layout would be useful.

Thanks and warm regards.

Paramita

From: Gauri KRISHNAN (NHB) [mailto:Gauri_KRISHNAN@nhb.gov.sg]
Sent: Thursday, 22 May, 2014 3:52 PM
To: Paramita Tripathi
Cc: 'PS to DHC'
Subject: FW: RE: Bust References

Dear Paramita

My thanks,

Gauri Krishnan

10







National
Heritage
Board

Dr. Gauri Krishnan :: Centre Director :: Indian Heritage Centre :: National Heritage Board :: DID +65 63321
:: Fax +65 63361507 :: 61, Stamford Road, #03-08, Stamford Court :: Singapore 178892

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<http://www.nhb.gov.sg>

REQUEST FOR BRONZE STATUES OF INDIAN LEADERS FOR INDIAN HERITAGE CENTRE, SINGAPORE

	Bust of E. Ramasamy Naikar (Periyar)	Height: 50cm without stand	Material: Bronze
	Jawaharlal Nehru	Height: 50cm without stand	Material: Bronze
	Mahatma Gandhi Statue	Height: 1m excluding base	Material: Bronze
	Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose	Height: 50 cm without stand	Material: Bronze

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Pys
= 11/6

AH (PIC)

(Copies taken IHC file yet to come back to me)
Dme Re 12.6.14

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- (c) Location – the exact location of the bust in the IHC along with layout plan, including lighting, etc.

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Dear Paramita

Herewith more details about our request for the busts of Indian leaders given below.

Do keep us posted on the progress. May we request to see some samples before you confirm the workshop in India to manufacture them.

Also the timeline for these to arrive in Singapore would be end September.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks,

Gauri Krishnan







National
Heritage
Board

Dr. Gauri Krishnan :: Centre Director :: Indian Heritage Centre :: National Heritage Board :: DID +65 63323
:: Fax +65 63361507 :: 61, Stamford Road, #03-08, Stamford Court :: Singapore 178892

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Paramita Tripathi

From: Paramita Tripathi <dhc.singapore@mea.gov.in>
Sent: Friday, 23 May, 2014 4:58 PM
To: 'dgiccr@iccrindia.net'
Cc: dgoffice.iccr@nic.in; 'hc@hcsingapore.org'; jssouth@mea.gov.in
Subject: FW: Status/Busts for Indian Heritage Centre

Dear Sir,

Reference your recent conversation with High Commissioner regarding the request from the Indian Heritage Centre in Singapore for four statues/busts.

I am forwarding the specifications of the four statues/busts as conveyed by the Indian Heritage Centre.

With warm regards.

Paramita

Paramita Tripathi
 DHC, HCI Singapore

From: Gauri KRISHNAN (NHB) [mailto:Gauri_KRISHNAN@nhb.gov.sg]
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15

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Sent: Thursday, 22 May, 2014 5:01 PM
To: Paramita Tripathi
Cc: 'PS to DHC'; 'Bharti S.Bhatnagar'
Subject: RE: RE: Bust References

Hi Paramita

We are still working on the layout, so can send it later in about 2 weeks' time.

Many thanks,

Gauri Krishnan



National
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Board

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16







National
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Dr.. Gauri Krishnan :: Centre Director :: Indian Heritage Centre :: National Heritage Board :: DID +65 6332:
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	Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose	Height: 50 cm without stand	Material: Bronze

17

S. C. Bore

Subject: A message is attached

To: jssouth@mea.gov.in, secyeast@mea.gov.in,
fsoffice <fsoffice@mea.gov.in>

Date: 04/24/14 04:05 PM

From: hc.singapore <hc.singapore@mea.gov.in>

SIN 24042014.egm (15kB)

IHC letter.pdf (564kB)

Kindly download attached file.

Regards

HCI Singapore
24/04/2014

Pls. file carefully.

fs(Hoc) - Info
AA(PIC) - n/a pls.

copy attached in ~~AAH~~ IHC file.
Bz

69

18

For official use
No. of pages: 3

E-gram

No.SIN/OEG-27/2014

April 24, 2014

From: High Commission of India, Singapore
To : Foreign New Delhi

Secretary(East) from HC
Rpt: 1. JS(South)
2. Dir(FSO)

Subject: Request of Indian Heritage Centre, Singapore for statues and busts of Indian national leaders – Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Periyar

Indian Heritage Centre (IHC) is being set up in Singapore with the support of the National Heritage Board (NHB) of Singapore to showcase the influence and contribution of Indians to this country. India and Singapore already have some collaboration for this project under the existing CEP. Our Ministry of Culture is helping IHC to get loan of some artifacts from Sarnath and Konark Museums.

2. One of the requests, which had earlier been made verbally, has now been forwarded in writing by NHB is **for a statue of Mahatma Gandhi and life size busts of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Pandit Nehru and Periyar** (copy enclosed). These leaders have been chosen because of linkages in one form or another with Singapore. An urn containing Gandhiji's ashes was brought to Singapore in 1948 and the ashes were scattered in the surrounding sea. Gurudev visited Singapore in 1927, Periyar in 1929, Pandit Nehru came here three times, 1937, 1946 and 1950, while it was here that Netaji assumed the leadership of INA. These busts will be displayed in the section on social and economic awakening of Indians in Singapore, a phenomenon which started in the post World War I period.

3. IHC already has a bust of Gurudev gifted earlier by India. **Would recommend that we donate all the four busts requested for, to IHC.** This, apart from highlighting our contribution to a centre profiling Indian heritage, would also be a befitting gesture on our part.

A copy also placed
on Netaji file.

4. May I mention that installing Netaji's statue in Singapore would also be a major step forward towards resurrecting the legacy of Netaji in Singapore. This is a subject on which there has been "careful treading" due to local sentiments. The Japanese occupation of Singapore during World War II is associated with atrocities committed by them; and INA's alignment with the Japanese makes Netaji's role a sensitive subject here. During World War II period, an INA Memorial was erected in Singapore. This was destroyed by the British forces when they reoccupied Singapore; it was only in late 1995, that the National Heritage Board erected a small marker in the memory of INA.

5. From India, there have been repeated calls for the reconstruction of the INA Memorial in Singapore and several Indian visitors suggested that something more should be done about highlighting INA's presence in Singapore. There are some in Singapore, essentially members of Indian community, who have attempted to look at Netaji's role in World War II more from the point of view of India's independence movement. They have succeeded in making small incremental headway over a period of time. A new biography of Netaji written by Sugata Bose was launched by the then President of Singapore, S.R. Nathan in July 2011. Subsequently, on the suggestions of the Institute of South Asian Studies, a small booklet commemorating Netaji's memory in Singapore was brought out. In all these activities, the Mission followed the line that it is best that the matter be handled by the people of Indian origin in Singapore and the Government of India should not take any public position unless we were specifically required to.

6. Historical memories whether of World War II, racial riots or others have not fully healed in Singapore. In fact, historical events often result in an eruption of emotions in Singapore. The recent naming of one of the ships by Indonesia after Harun & Usman, two Indonesian marines who were involved in the attack on a building in Singapore in early 1960s, caused a furor. Even with respect to Netaji, about two years ago (31.01.2012), a visitor from London had in a letter to the Straits Times written that Memorial to INA, i.e., marker set up in 1995 is disrespect to those who died fighting the Japanese. This letter resulted in angry exchange of letters in newspapers. Some prominent Indians did forward views that the atrocities were committed by the Japanese during the wartime occupation of Singapore, and Netaji and INA's alliance with the

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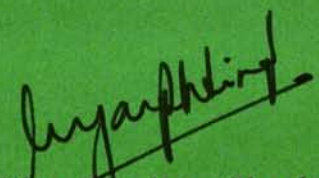
Japanese was not out of love of Japanese imperialism but a hatred of British imperialism in India. The matter was finally put to rest after a letter was written by the Director of the National Heritage Board who described the INA monument a historical marker, denoting the site of the original INA memorial demolished by the British in 1945 on their return to Singapore. It was also mentioned that although several million Indian troops fought World War II as part of the Allied forces, there was a small number in the form of the INA who saw it, at that point in time, as their mission to free India from colonial rule.

7. Be that as it may, this time, the request for busts, including of Netaji has come forward from the Singapore side. This is an opportunity to have a full presence of our leadership in a centre located in the heart of the city and likely to be visited by many. It also gives us an opening to mark Netaji's association with Singapore.

8. One of the three INA veterans, Bala A. Chandran died recently (I had participated in the prayer meeting held for him). Now only two living INA veterans are in Singapore and it would be good if we are able to have a statue of Netaji in Singapore during their life time.

9. Hence, in view of above, I would urge an early decision about India donating statue/busts of Indian leaders to the Indian Heritage Centre. Once such a decision has been taken, we shall ask Dr. Gauri Krishnan, Centre Director of IHC to remain in touch to coordinate further regarding their exact requirement, the kind of statues and busts they want (size, dimensions, etc) for the IHC.

With warm regards,


(Vijay Makur Singh)



NHB 32.50

16th April, 2014

Ms. Vijay Thakur Singh

Indian High Commissioner in Singapore

31 Grange Rd, Singapore 239702

Your Excellency

RE: Busts and Sculptures of Indian Leaders for the Indian Heritage Centre

Background

The Indian Heritage Centre (IHC), under the Heritage Institutions Division of the National Heritage Board, traces the history of the Indian and South Asian community in the Southeast Asian region. Located within the Little India Heritage precinct, the Centre will highlight the historical contact between the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia; the Indian Diaspora and the migration patterns of Singapore Indians; Indians in pre-Independence Singapore; the war years and the independence movement in India and its impact on Singapore; and Singapore as a nation – in the – making and the contributions of the Singapore Indian community. The IHC will open in 2015 and will have two floors of permanent galleries that will feature rare artefacts, photos, documents and multi-media interactives. IHC will include small scale museum facilities for changing exhibitions as well as programming and educational spaces.

Proposed Request

In IHC's permanent gallery's theme on World War II reflecting the Indian community in Malaya's participation in the Indian Independence Movement, the IHC hopes to showcase, 5 Indian leaders who visited Singapore/Malaya and/or influenced the lives of the Indian community in this region. These include Mahatma Gandhi; Jawaharlal Nehru; Rabindranath Tagore; Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose; and Periyar. We would like a walking statue of Gandhi and life size busts of Periyar, Netaji, Nehru. Earlier, we have already received a bust of Tagore brought over by former foreign minister Mr. S.M. Krishna.



**National
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Board**

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61 Stamford Road #03-08
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www.nhb.gov.sg

22

Following our tele – conversation yesterday, I write to request for the assistance of the Indian High Commission in Singapore with the procurement of these busts/sculptures. Additionally, we would also like to request for your consideration if these sculptures can be a gift from the Government of India to the Indian Heritage Centre.

I look forward to your positive response and further advice.

Warm Regards,

Dr. Gauri Krishnan

Centre Director

Indian Heritage Centre



NHB 32.50

16th April, 2014

Ms. Vijay Thakur Singh

Indian High Commissioner in Singapore

31 Grange Rd, Singapore 239702

Your Excellency

RE: Busts and Sculptures of Indian Leaders for the Indian Heritage Centre

Background

The Indian Heritage Centre (IHC), under the Heritage Institutions Division of the National Heritage Board, traces the history of the Indian and South Asian community in the Southeast Asian region. Located within the Little India Heritage precinct, the Centre will highlight the historical contact between the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia; the Indian Diaspora and the migration patterns of Singapore Indians; Indians in pre-Independence Singapore; the war years and the independence movement in India and its impact on Singapore; and Singapore as a nation – in the – making and the contributions of the Singapore Indian community. The IHC will open in 2015 and will have two floors of permanent galleries that will feature rare artefacts, photos, documents and multi-media interactives. IHC will include small scale museum facilities for changing exhibitions as well as programming and educational spaces.

Proposed Request

In IHC's permanent gallery's theme on World War II reflecting the Indian community in Malaya's participation in the Indian Independence Movement, the IHC hopes to showcase, 5 Indian leaders who visited Singapore/Malaya and/or influenced the lives of the Indian community in this region. These include Mahatma Gandhi; Jawaharlal Nehru; Rabindranath Tagore; Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose; and Periyar. We would like a walking statue of Gandhi and life size busts of Periyar, Netaji, Nehru. Earlier, we have already received a bust of Tagore brought over by former foreign minister Mr. S.M. Krishna.



**National
Heritage
Board**

National Heritage Board
61 Stamford Road #03-08
Stamford Court
Singapore 178892
www.nhb.gov.sg

24

Following our tele – conversation yesterday, I write to request for the assistance of the Indian High Commission in Singapore with the procurement of these busts/sculptures. Additionally, we would also like to request for your consideration if these sculptures can be a gift from the Government of India to the Indian Heritage Centre.

I look forward to your positive response and further advice.

Warm Regards,

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Gauri Krishnan

Centre Director

Indian Heritage Centre

HC Office

From: HC Office [hcoffice@hcisingsapore.org]
Sent: Thursday, 24 April, 2014 9:57 AM
To: 'saibaba@singnet.com.sg'
Subject: Re:

Dear Mrs. Bala,

Thank you very much for your letter. For me to be with you in your hour of bereavement, was my duty.

Mr. Bala A. Chandran, whom I have had the occasion to meet and interact with, was a person of high values and a great humane approach. His detailed accounts of his days in the Balak Sena of the INA which he joined at the young age of 14 and many incidents that he recalled about Netaji was, for me, very humbling and a reminder of the many sacrifices made by our national leaders for our independence.

At any point of time, please feel free to call me and I look forward to remaining in touch with you.

Warm regards,

Vijay Thakur Singh
High Commissioner of India
31 Grange Road
Singapore - 239702
Telephone: +65-62382518
Fax: +65-67378696
E-mail: hcoffice@hcisingsapore.org

H.E. Mrs. Vijay Thakur Singh

The gem of my life is no more. but I realised that he has left behind many gems like you.

Thank you for being there for me.

God Bless You.

with Love

Mrs. Bala A. Chandran
(Vicki)

saibala@singnet.com.sg.

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Thank You

To,

27



H. E. Mrs. Vijay Thakur Singh
The High Commission of India,
31, Grange Road
Singapore 239702.

Death of an INA vet

Bala A. Chandran was in the youth wing of the Indian National Army during World War II

NILANJANA SENGUPTA

I FIRST met Mr Bala A. Chandran (Bala to many in Singapore) in 2011 at one of the many Udupi restaurants of Serangoon Road. To my surprise (and some consternation) he greeted me with a firm *Jai Hind!*

I noticed an unmistakable straightening of the shoulders and an Ancient Mariner-like glitter in his eyes at the mention of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. It was that momentary transformation which sparked my interest in the INA (Indian National Army) story and *A Gentleman's Word* was born.

Bala, who died on March 15 aged 86, was a young boy of 14 when he first saw Netaji. He was from a migrant Indian family of modest means from Palakkad, Kerala, and they lived in a kampung off Bukit Timah. When war struck Singapore in 1942, Bukit Timah was not the upper-end address it is today and they lived in an attap house, growing vegetables and rearing cattle.

The drumroll of Netaji's arrival started long before his arrival in South-east Asia from Berlin and Bala remembered having the news read out to him by his mother from the Malayalam paper *Kerala Bandhu*.

Bala was present, along with a substantial section of the Indian immigrant community, on July 5, 1943, when Netaji made one of his first public appearances in Singapore. Till the last days of his life (before debilitating disease overtook him completely) he reminisced with pride about that day.

Some 12,000 soldiers of the INA as well as a rapturous crowd of civilians gathered at the Singapore Padang, opposite the Municipal Building (now City Hall) to listen to Netaji as he declared: "To Delhi! To Delhi! How many of us will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know. But I do know this... our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the victory parade on another graveyard of the British Empire, Lal Kila of ancient Delhi."

Bala joined the Balak Sena (Youth Wing) of the INA against the wishes of his family. Afterwards, life was never the same again. The Balak Sena was intended for infiltrating the British Indian Army and gathering intelligence at the Indo-Burmese border. Bala took up residence at the INA's Azad School on Gilstead Road and training began in earnest.

He remembered going for morning runs down Stevens Road and Balmoral Road and life at the camps threw up a rich array of thoughts on not only nationalism but oth-



RIP Bala... (top, from left) Bala and fellow INA veterans Kishore Bhattacharya and Girish Kothari with then Foreign Minister George Yeo. (Above) This photograph, of the Balak Sena, was presented to Pandit Nehru during his visit to Singapore in 1946. Bala is on the right of the group leader (unidentified) who sits at the centre of the second row.

er radical political schools as well. They sang patriotic songs, learnt about Indian history and it was a time of redefining one's ideas of freedom.

With the war ending and the sudden demise of Netaji in 1945, the INA unravelled and yet the seeds of new thinking remained in Bala's mind, just as it did for the many others who had joined. The INA had prepared them for leadership roles, taught them discipline and the importance of repaying community debts. He lived with these ideals to the end and will be remembered for his grassroots work as the chairman of the Residents' Committee of the Pasir Ris GRC. He was also a freelance journalist for several publications and a PR consultant.

As ambassador K. Kesavapany, former director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and a close family friend, points out: "It was this spirit of sacrificial patriotism that inspired him to the end, evident in his wish to donate his body for medical research (to the NUS Medical School)."

On his demise, his family home was visited by Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, Indian high commissioner Vijay Thakur Singh, Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC MP Zainal Sapari and Joo Chiat MP Charles Chong and his wife. Bala will be remembered by many who benefited from his altruistic work. His death signifies the passing of an age – an age of selfless ideals and the rare determination to live by them. May the soul of the soldier rest in peace. There will be a prayer meeting at 7.30pm on March 27 at the Sri Sivan Temple in Geylang.

Nilanjana Sengupta is the author of A Gentleman's Word: The Legacy Of Subhas Chandra Bose In Southeast Asia.



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29



T.C.A. Raghavan

HIGH COMMISSIONER OF INDIA
31 GRANGE ROAD
SINGAPORE 239702
Tel: 62382510 / 62382518 / 62382520
Fax: 67378696
E-mail: hc@hcsingapore.org
Website: www.hcsingapore.gov.in

No.SIN/162/7/2012

January 31, 2013

Dear Joint Secretary,

This is with reference to your letter No.373/JS(Parl.&Coord)/2013 dated January 23, 2013. There is a long background to the issue of the INA in Singapore. I am enclosing a letter I had earlier written to Secretary(East) dated February 7, 2012 which gives you a broad overview of the sensitivities involved.

2. Specifically on the issue of the INA Memorial on which Dr. Ranjit Bhargava had written to EAM, the factual position is as follows.

3. There is no INA "Monument" at Farrer Park. The "Monument" is in fact at the Esplanade Park. It is in good condition and the plaque and inscriptions are regularly renovated. Photographs taken on 29/1/2013 may be seen at Annexure-I. It is useful to know that this structure is not called a "monument" although earlier it was termed as such.

4. It so happens that EAM in his capacity as Minister for Water Resources had been present in a ~~very~~ large profile function in Singapore to mark the release of a new biography of Subhash Chandra Bose in July 2011. A brochure which was brought out on the occasion is attached and EAM may wish to forward this along with the draft letter which is attached. There are many local institutions and persons who work for keeping the live and message of Netaji relevant. Our policy is to work with them but behind the scenes.

5. A draft letter from EAM is also attached.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
(T.C.A. Raghavan)

Shri Mridul Kumr
Joint Secretary(Parl. & Coord)
Ministry of External Affairs
New Delhi
Encls: as above

Copy with enclosures to:

1. Shri Sanjay Singh, Secretary(East), MEA, New Delhi
2. Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya, Joint Secy(South), MEA, New Delhi

La murepards T.C.A. Raghavan

9

Dear Dr. Bhargava,

Kindly refer to your letter of November 1, 2012 regarding neglect of India's heritage sites abroad including the INA Memorial in Singapore.

2. The structure commemorating the INA Memorial is situated at Esplanade Park, Singapore. The National Heritage Board, Government of Singapore which looks after the heritage sites has recently renovated the INA Memorial with the inscriptions re-written. Our High Commission keeps regularly visiting the structure and have intimated that it is in good condition.

3. I am enclosing a brochure which had been brought out from Singapore recently to document Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and his relationship with Singapore. It so happens, I was present in Singapore in an earlier capacity when a book on the biography of Subhash Chandra Bose was launched by the former President of Singapore. We are aware that there are many in Singapore who work tirelessly to keep the memory of Subhash Chandra Bose relevant. At the same time, we are also aware that there are many people who recall the history of Japanese occupation of Singapore with some bitterness. As such, we try to work with local institutions and individuals taking into account all these sensitivities.

5. I am sure you will be happy to see the resonance which Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose has in Singapore.

Yours sincerely,

(Salman Khurshid)

Dr. R.K. Ranjit Bhargava,
The Hive,
Ayarpata
Nainital - 263001
(Uttarakhand)

31



T.C.A. Raghavan

HIGH COMMISSIONER OF INDIA
31 GRANGE ROAD
SINGAPORE 239702
Tel: 62382510 / 62382518 / 62382520
Fax: 67378696
E-mail: hc@hcsingapore.org
Website: www.hcsingapore.com

Handwritten signature/initials

RESTRICTED

No. SIN/HC/12

February 7, 2012

Dear Secretary,

As you are aware there has always been an undercurrent of strong reservation from many in Singapore with reference to the memory and legacy of Subhas Chandra Bose and the INA. A scrutiny of older files reveals that these sentiments were strong in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This was certainly the case when demands in our Parliament and especially in West Bengal for a memorial to Subhas Chandra Bose and the INA received less than a lukewarm response in Singapore. Government of India on its part also attempted to play down this issue domestically and left the matter to be pursued by people of Indian Origin in Singapore who in themselves form a strong pro-Netaji and INA constituency domestically in Singapore.

2. This policy has worked to some extent and with the passage of time, bitter memories of the Japanese occupation and genocide appeared to have eased. In 1995 the National Heritage Board erected a small memorial to the INA and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. This, to a considerable extent, although not wholly, addressed concerns in India about a suitable memorial for Netaji in Singapore. I say this because from time to time visitors from India have mentioned that the NHB marker is a relatively small one. However, on the whole it had appeared that memories of the Japanese occupation were fading and as such there were signs that the INA's legacy in Singapore was being seen in less contested terms. In July 2011 the then President of Singapore S. R. Nathan presided over a book launch of a new Biography of Netaji by the Harvard Professor Sugata Bose. The former FM George Yeo had also attended this launch. The event was organised by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. The High Commission associated itself with it following a specific request to this effect from Ambassador K. Kesavapany, Director of the Institute of South East Asian Studies.

3. Thereafter a suggestion emerged from the Institute of South East Asian Studies that the High Commission and the Institute should jointly bring a small booklet commemorating Netaji's memory in Singapore as also the book launch function which was presided by the President. Although the High Commission had in part funded this publication (copy enclosed), I had decided that we would not have our name printed as one of the publishers. This was not so much to stay out of domestic controversy in Singapore but rather to avoid getting involved in a

FOX II

controversy in India. There was a possibility of the latter since there was a tangential reference in George Yeō's foreword to this booklet about Netaji being seen as a Japanese collaborator. On the whole however the booklet has been well received. Our impression therefore was that Netaji's legacy was now seen less in terms of Japanese atrocities in Singapore and was accepted as part of the general anti-colonial history of Asia.

4. However, there has been a recent exchange of angry letters in *The Straits Times* of which I enclose copies. In brief, it is inescapable that Subhas Chandra Bose's legacy in Singapore remains a contested one.

5. I pen this letter for your information because of the light it casts on how a certain aspect of India - Singapore history remains open to multiple readings. It is also useful to underline the fact that as far as Netaji's commemoration and legacy in Singapore is concerned; it is best to let the matter be handled by people of Indian origin in Singapore and not for the Government of India to take any public position unless we are specifically asked to do so. That has been our policy so far and it is a wise one.

6. Finally my apologies for inflicting this history tutorial.

With warm regards
Yours sincerely,

T.C.A. Raghavan

(T.C.A. Raghavan)

Shri Sanjay Singh
Secretary (East)
Ministry of External Affairs
South Block
New Delhi

Encl.: - As above

Issued 13/9/12
slc

Copy with enclosures to:-

1. Shri Ranjan Mathai, Foreign Secretary, MEA, South Block, New Delhi.
2. Shri A. K Goel, Joint Secretary (South), MEA, South Block, New Delhi
3. Shri Navdeep Suri, Joint Secretary (PD), MEA, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi

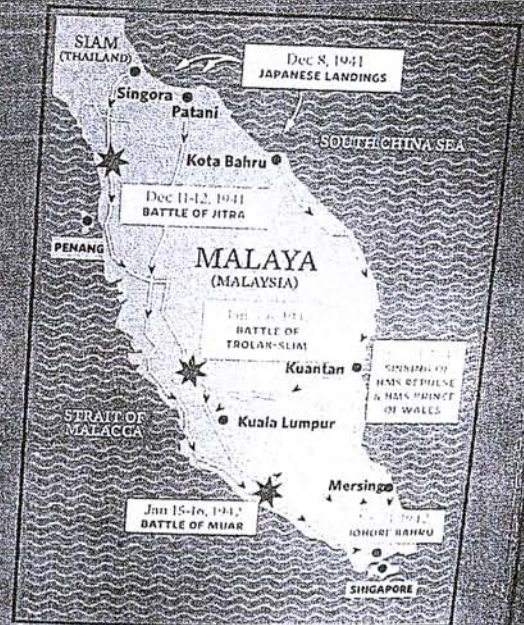
(T.C.A. Raghavan)
High Commissioner

INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

In the final months of the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, a memorial dedicated to the "Unknown Warrior" of the Indian National Army (INA) was constructed at this site.

The local INA was formed in 1942 with Japanese support. It sought to liberate India from the British and consisted mainly of prisoners-of-war from the British Indian Army. Subhas Chandra Bose, who led the INA from 1943 onwards, laid a foundation stone for the monument in July 1945. The Urdu words inscribed on the monument read: ITTEFAQ (unity), (ITMAD) faith and KURBANI (sacrifice).

When the British returned to Singapore, they demolished the memorial barely two months after its installation.



INVASION MAP OF MALAYA



- 1 - SARIMBUN BEACH LANDING
- 2 - KRANJI BEACH BATTLE
- 3 - CAUSEWAY
- 4 - JURONG - KRANJI DEFENCE LINE
- 5 - BUKIT BATOK MEMORIAL
- 6 - BATTLE OF BUKIT TIMAH
- 7 - LIM BO SENG'S BURIAL SITE
- 8 - RIMAU 10 EXECUTION SITE
- 9 - PASIR PANJANG BATTLE SITE
- 10 - LABRADOR BATTERY
- 11 - SENTOSA BEACH MASSACRE SITE
- 12 - KEPPEL HARBOUR
- 13 - SOOK CHING SCREENING CENTRE
- 14 - FORT CANNING COMMAND CENTRE
- 15 - YMCA (KEMPEITAI EAST DISTRICT BRANCH)
- 16 - THE CATHAY
- 17 - INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY
- 18 - SELETAR AIRBASE
- 19 - PUNGGOL BEACH MASSACRE SITE
- 20 - CHANGI BEACH MASSACRE SITE



TENTERA NASIONAL INDIA

Sebuah monumen memperingati "Para Pahlawan Yang Tidak Diketahui" dalam Tentera Nasional India telah dibina di tapak ini pada tahun 1945.

Tentera Nasional India setempat telah dibentuk pada tahun 1942 dengan sokongan Jepun untuk membebaskan India daripada penjajahan British.

Setelah pulang ke Singapura, mereka telah merobohkan tugu ini.

印度国民军

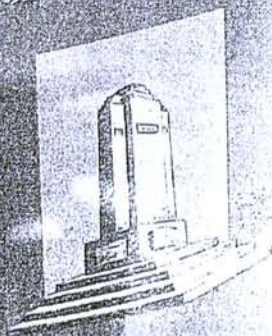
1942年，这里曾竖立一个纪念碑，以纪念印度国民军的“无名战士”。当地的印度国民军于1942年在日军的支持下成立，目的在于协助印度脱离英国统治。英军重返新加坡后，纪念碑即被拆除。

இந்திய தேசியப் படை

இந்திய தேசிய இராணுவத்தின் ஐஎன்ஏ "பெயர் தெரியாத வீரர்களுக்கு" அர்ப்பணிக்கப்பட்ட நினைவுச்சின்னம் ஒன்று இந்த இடத்தில் 1942ல் கட்டப்பட்டது. ஜப்பானியர் ஆதரவுடன் இந்தியாவைப் பிரிட்டிஷாரிடமிருந்து விடுவதற்காக சிவபுரம் தீவம் தேசியப் படை 1942ல் அமைக்கப்பட்டது. பிரிட்டிஷார் சிவபுரத்தைத் திருமியம் பிறகு இக்கிளந்தைத் திட்டத்தில் உள்ளனர்.

インド国民軍

インド国民軍 (INA) の「無名戦士」に捧げる記念碑が1945年2月に建てられ、1942年、英国からインドを解放するため、日本軍の支援を受けシンガポールに設置された。この記念碑はシンガポールに帰還した英軍によって取り壊された。



INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

In the final months of the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, a memorial dedicated to the "Unknown Warrior" of the Indian National Army (INA) was constructed at this site.

The local INA was formed in 1942 with Japanese support. It sought to liberate India from the British and consisted mainly of prisoners-of-war from the British Indian Army. Subhas Chandra Bose, who led the INA from 1943 onwards, laid a foundation stone for the monument in July 1945. The Urdu words inscribed on the monument read: ITTEFAQ (unity), (QTMAD) faith and KURBANI (sacrifice).

When the British returned to Singapore, they demolished the memorial barely two months after its installation.



1. SAKHIBIN BEACH LANDING
2. KANUNJI BEACH BATTLE
3. CAUSEWAY
4. JILONG - KANUNJI DEFENCE LINE
5. KANUNJI BEACH BATTLE
6. KANUNJI BEACH BATTLE
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20. KANUNJI BEACH BATTLE



TEMPERATURE

TEMPERATURE: 25°C (77°F) - 30°C (86°F) - 35°C (95°F) - 40°C (104°F) - 45°C (113°F) - 50°C (122°F) - 55°C (131°F) - 60°C (140°F) - 65°C (149°F) - 70°C (158°F) - 75°C (167°F) - 80°C (176°F) - 85°C (185°F) - 90°C (194°F) - 95°C (203°F) - 100°C (212°F) - 105°C (220°F) - 110°C (230°F) - 115°C (239°F) - 120°C (248°F) - 125°C (257°F) - 130°C (266°F) - 135°C (275°F) - 140°C (284°F) - 145°C (293°F) - 150°C (302°F) - 155°C (311°F) - 160°C (320°F) - 165°C (329°F) - 170°C (338°F) - 175°C (347°F) - 180°C (356°F) - 185°C (365°F) - 190°C (374°F) - 195°C (383°F) - 200°C (392°F) - 205°C (401°F) - 210°C (410°F) - 215°C (419°F) - 220°C (428°F) - 225°C (437°F) - 230°C (446°F) - 235°C (455°F) - 240°C (464°F) - 245°C (473°F) - 250°C (482°F) - 255°C (491°F) - 260°C (500°F) - 265°C (509°F) - 270°C (518°F) - 275°C (527°F) - 280°C (536°F) - 285°C (545°F) - 290°C (554°F) - 295°C (563°F) - 300°C (572°F) - 305°C (581°F) - 310°C (590°F) - 315°C (599°F) - 320°C (608°F) - 325°C (617°F) - 330°C (626°F) - 335°C (635°F) - 340°C (644°F) - 345°C (653°F) - 350°C (662°F) - 355°C (671°F) - 360°C (680°F) - 365°C (689°F) - 370°C (698°F) - 375°C (707°F) - 380°C (716°F) - 385°C (725°F) - 390°C (734°F) - 395°C (743°F) - 400°C (752°F) - 405°C (761°F) - 410°C (770°F) - 415°C (779°F) - 420°C (788°F) - 425°C (797°F) - 430°C (806°F) - 435°C (815°F) - 440°C (824°F) - 445°C (833°F) - 450°C (842°F) - 455°C (851°F) - 460°C (860°F) - 465°C (869°F) - 470°C (878°F) - 475°C (887°F) - 480°C (896°F) - 485°C (905°F) - 490°C (914°F) - 495°C (923°F) - 500°C (932°F) - 505°C (941°F) - 510°C (950°F) - 515°C (959°F) - 520°C (968°F) - 525°C (977°F) - 530°C (986°F) - 535°C (995°F) - 540°C (1004°F) - 545°C (1013°F) - 550°C (1022°F) - 555°C (1031°F) - 560°C (1040°F) - 565°C (1049°F) - 570°C (1058°F) - 575°C (1067°F) - 580°C (1076°F) - 585°C (1085°F) - 590°C (1094°F) - 595°C (1103°F) - 600°C (1112°F) - 605°C (1121°F) - 610°C (1130°F) - 615°C (1139°F) - 620°C (1148°F) - 625°C (1157°F) - 630°C (1166°F) - 635°C (1175°F) - 640°C (1184°F) - 645°C (1193°F) - 650°C (1202°F) - 655°C (1211°F) - 660°C (1220°F) - 665°C (1229°F) - 670°C (1238°F) - 675°C (1247°F) - 680°C (1256°F) - 685°C (1265°F) - 690°C (1274°F) - 695°C (1283°F) - 700°C (1292°F) - 705°C (1301°F) - 710°C (1310°F) - 715°C (1319°F) - 720°C (1328°F) - 725°C (1337°F) - 730°C (1346°F) - 735°C (1355°F) - 740°C (1364°F) - 745°C (1373°F) - 750°C (1382°F) - 755°C (1391°F) - 760°C (1400°F) - 765°C (1409°F) - 770°C (1418°F) - 775°C (1427°F) - 780°C (1436°F) - 785°C (1445°F) - 790°C (1454°F) - 795°C (1463°F) - 800°C (1472°F) - 805°C (1481°F) - 810°C (1490°F) - 815°C (1499°F) - 820°C (1508°F) - 825°C (1517°F) - 830°C (1526°F) - 835°C (1535°F) - 840°C (1544°F) - 845°C (1553°F) - 850°C (1562°F) - 855°C (1571°F) - 860°C (1580°F) - 865°C (1589°F) - 870°C (1598°F) - 875°C (1607°F) - 880°C (1616°F) - 885°C (1625°F) - 890°C (1634°F) - 895°C (1643°F) - 900°C (1652°F) - 905°C (1661°F) - 910°C (1670°F) - 915°C (1679°F) - 920°C (1688°F) - 925°C (1697°F) - 930°C (1706°F) - 935°C (1715°F) - 940°C (1724°F) - 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3470°C (6278°F) - 3475°C (6287°F) - 3480°C (6296°F) - 3485°C (6305°F) - 3490°C (6314°F) - 3495°C (6323°F) - 3500°C (6332°F) - 3505°C (6341°F) - 3510°C (6350°F) - 3515°C (6359°F) - 3520°C (6368°F) - 3525°C (6377°F) - 3530°C (6386°F) - 3535°C (6395°F) - 3540°C (6404°F) - 3545°C (6413°F) - 3550°C (6422°F) - 3555°C (6431°F) - 3560°C (6440°F) - 3565°C (6449°F) - 3570°C (6458°F) - 3575°C (6467°F) - 3580°C (6476°F) - 3585°C (6485°F) - 3590°C (6494°F) - 3595°C (6503°F) - 3600°C (6512°F) - 3605°C (6521°F) - 3610°C (6530°F) - 3615°C (6539°F) - 3620°C (6548°F) - 3625°C (6557°F) - 3630°C (6566°F) - 3635°C (6575°F) - 3640°C (6584°F) - 3645°C (6593°F) - 3650°C (6602°F) - 3655°C (6611°F) - 3660°C (6620°F) - 3665°C (6629°F) - 3670°C (6638°F) - 3675°C (6647°F) - 3680°C (6656°F) - 3685°C (6665°F) - 3690°C (6674°F) - 3695°C (6683°F) - 3700°C (6692°F) - 3705°C (6701°F) - 3710°C (6710°F) - 3715°C (6719°F) - 3720°C (6728°F) - 3725°C (6737°F) - 3730°C (6746°F) - 3735°C (6755°F) - 3740°C (6764°F) - 3745°C (6773°F) - 3750°C (6782°F) - 3755°C (6791°F) - 3760°C (6800°F) - 3765°C (6809°F) - 3770°C (6818°F) - 3775°C (6827°F) - 3780°C (6836°F) - 3785°C (6845°F) - 3790°C (6854°F) - 3795°C (6863°F) - 3800°C (6872°F) - 3805°C (6881°F) - 3810°C (6890°F) - 3815°C (6899°F) - 3820°C (6908°F) - 3825°C (6917°F) - 3830°C (6926°F) - 3835°C (6935°F) - 3840°C (6944°F) - 3845°C (6953°F) - 3850°C (6962°F) - 3855°C (6971°F) - 3860°C (6980°F) - 3865°C (6989°F) - 3870°C (6998°F) - 3875°C (7007°F) - 3880°C (7016°F) - 3885°C (7025°F) - 3890°C (7034°F) - 3895°C (7043°F) - 3900°C (7052°F) - 3905°C (7061°F) - 3910°C (7070°F) - 3915°C (7079°F) - 3920°C (7088°F) - 3925°C (7097°F) - 3930°C (7106°F) - 3935°C (7115°F) - 3940°C (7124°F) - 3945°C (7133°F) - 3950°C (7142°F) - 3955°C (7151°F) - 3960°C (7160°F) - 3965°C (7169°F) - 3970°C (7178°F) - 3975°C (7187°F) - 3980°C (7196°F) - 3985°C (7205°F) - 3990°C (7214°F) - 3995°C (7223°F) - 4000°C (7232°F) - 4005°C (7241°F) - 4010°C (7250°F) - 4015°C (7259°F) - 4020°C (7268°F) - 4025°C (7277°F) - 4030°C (7286°F) - 4035°C (7295°F) - 4040°C (7304°F) - 4045°C (7313°F) - 4050°C (7322°F) - 4055°C (7331°F) - 4060°C (7340°F) - 4065°C (7349°F) - 4070°C (7358°F) - 4075°C (7367°F) - 4080°C (7376°F) - 4085°C (7385°F) - 4090°C (7394°F) - 4095°C (7403°F) - 4100°C (7412°F) - 4105°C (7421°F) - 4110°C (7430°F) - 4115°C (7439°F) - 4120°C (7448°F) - 4125°C (7457°F) - 4130°C (7466°F) - 4135°C (7475°F) - 4140°C (7484°F) - 4145°C (7493°F) - 4150°C (7502°F) - 4155°C (7511°F) - 4160°C (7520°F) - 4165°C (7529°F) - 4170°C (7538°F) - 4175°C (7547°F) - 4180°C (7556°F) - 4185°C (7565°F) - 4190°C (7574°F) - 4195°C (7583°F) - 4200°C (7592°F) - 4205°C (7601°F) - 4210°C (7610°F) - 4215°C (7619°F) - 4220°C (7628°F) - 4225°C (7637°F) - 4230°C (7646°F) - 4235°C (76

A black and white photograph showing a large, dense tree in the foreground, its branches and leaves filling the upper half of the frame. Behind the tree, a building with a light-colored facade and dark windows is visible. The ground in the foreground appears to be a paved or dirt area, with some shadows cast by the tree. The overall image has a grainy, high-contrast quality, similar to a photocopy or a solarized print.

A black and white photograph showing a large, dense tree in the foreground, its branches and leaves filling the upper half of the frame. Behind the tree, a building with a light-colored facade and dark windows is visible. The ground in the foreground appears to be a paved or dirt area, with some shadows cast by the tree. The overall image has a grainy, high-contrast quality, similar to a photocopy or a solarized print.



-



29/01/20

INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

In the final months of the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, a memorial dedicated to the "Unknown Warrior" of the Indian National Army (INA) was constructed at this site.

The local INA was formed in 1942 with Japanese support. It sought to liberate India from the British and consisted mainly of prisoners-of-war from the British Indian Army. Subhas Chandra Bose, who led the INA from 1943 onwards, laid a foundation stone for the monument in July 1945. The Urdu words inscribed on the monument read: ITTEFAQ (unity), (ITMAD) faith and KURBANI (sacrifice).

When the British returned to Singapore, they demolished the memorial barely two months after its installation.



- 1 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE
- 2 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE
- 3 - KRAVING
- 4 - KRAVING - KRANLI DEFENCE LINE
- 5 - BUKIT BATOK MEMORIAL
- 6 - BATTLE OF BUKIT TIMAH
- 7 - LHM BO KENG'S BURIAL SITE
- 8 - BUKIT BATOK BATTLE SITE
- 9 - PAPER PARKING BATTLE SITE
- 10 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 11 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 12 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 13 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 14 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 15 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 16 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 17 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 18 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 19 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE
- 20 - KRAVING BEACH BATTLE SITE



TENTERA NASIONAL INDIA

Sebuah tugu untuk memperingati "Para Pahlawan Yang Tidak Dikenal" dalam Tentera Nasional India (INA) telah dibina di tapak ini pada tahun 1945.

Tentera Nasional India setempat telah dibentuk pada tahun 1942 dengan sokongan Jepun untuk membebaskan India daripada penjajahan British.

Apabila British pulang ke Singapura, mereka telah memusnahkan tugu ini.

印度国民军

1945年，这里曾建立一个纪念碑，以纪念印度国民军的“无名战士”。本地的印度国民军于1942年在日军的支持下成立，目的在于协助印度脱离英国统治，并帮助日本侵略。

இந்திய தேசிய படை.

இந்திய தேசிய இராணுவத்தின் ஈழப் படை "அறியப்படாத வீரர்கள்" நினைவிடம் கட்டப்பட்டது.

இந்திய தேசிய இராணுவம் 1942-ல் இந்தியாவில் இருந்து இந்தியாவை விடுவிக்கவோ, அல்லது இந்தியாவை இந்தியாவிலிருந்து விடுவிக்கவோ திட்டமிட்டது.

இந்திய தேசிய இராணுவம் 1945-ல் இந்தியாவை விடுவிக்கவோ, அல்லது இந்தியாவை இந்தியாவிலிருந்து விடுவிக்கவோ திட்டமிட்டது.

インド国民軍

インド国民軍 (INA) の「無名戦士」に捧げる記念碑が1945年に建立された。1942年に日本軍からインドを解放するため、日本軍の支援を受けたインド国民軍が設立された。

この記念碑はシンガポールに帰還した英軍によって取り壊された。



29/01/20

2013



INDIAN NATIONAL
ARMY MONUMENT

26/12/2011

INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY MONUMENT

39

In the final months of the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, a memorial dedicated to the "Unknown Warrior" of the Indian National Army (INA) was constructed at this site.

The local INA was formed in 1942 with Japanese support. It sought to liberate India from the British and consisted



Mridul Kumar

Joint Secretary (Parliament & Coord.)



Ministry of External Affairs

79, South Block, New Delhi-110011

Tel : +91-11-2301 2987; Fax : +91-11-2301 0727

E-mail: jsparlvip@mea.gov.in

MOST IMMEDIATE

TO	HICOMIND SINGAPORE
NO.	373/JS(Parl. & Coord.)/2013
DATE	January 23, 2013
NO. OF PAGES	Four

High Commissioner from Joint Secretary(Parl. & Coord.)

Repeat : Joint Secretary(South)

Repeat: Joint Secretary (EAMO)

Please find enclosed a copy of letter from Dr. Ranjit Bhargava addressed to Hon'ble External Affairs Minister regarding non-descript state of the Indian National Army Memorial in Farrer Park, Singapore.

2. You may kindly look into the matter and take necessary action under intimation to undersigned. A draft response from EAM to Dr. Bhargava on the subject will be highly appreciated.

with kind regards,

M. P. v. draft reply

[Mridul Kumar]

24/1

Encl.: As above

DNC

*According to CSMOP 'Each Communication received from the Member of Parliament, a member of the public, a recognized association of a public body will be acknowledge within 15 days, followed by a reply within the next 15 days of acknowledgment sent'.

Pl go and see Draft placed below.

the memorial.

Is the description ~~He~~

at x' accurate ??

huc M 28/1

R. K. Dr. RANJIT BHARGAVA

D.F.A, Ph.D.

PADMA SHRI

Officer, Order of the Golden Ark (Netherlands)

Ritter, Order of Merit (Germany)



Phone : 05942-235713

Mobile : 9235556288

THE HIVE, AYARPATA

NAINITAL-263001

(UTTARAKHAND)

No. 476 EAM/20.../13
Dated 15/11/13

JS (Par) November 1, 2012

Date 15/11/13

Subject :- NEGLECT OF INDIA'S HERITAGE SITES ABROAD

My Dear Salman Bhai,

It is a matter of much delight to me that you have taken over as our External Affairs Minister. I write to bring to your kind attention the sad condition of India's Heritage Sites abroad. We need to erect befitting memorials, at the spots mentioned below as this will be in keeping with the glory and pride of India and us Indians; and history will remember you for taking action in this matter :

- (a) Begum Hazrat Mahal's tomb on Darbar Marg, Kathmandu is in a painfully broken down condition with encroachments on three sides and garbage littered all over. Empty 'Ghee containers' also used as flower pots adorn the resting place of the valiant Queen of Avadh, who after loosing to the British in the 1857 War of Independence took refuge in Kathmandu (A recent photograph is Annexure I). A suitable Memorial, perhaps in the shape of a grand column, can be erected there with the cooperation of the Government of Nepal. The whole of Uttar Pradesh will be most thankful to you.
- (b) The Indian National Army Memorial in Farrer Park, Singapore is in a non-descript state. All that now remains there is a small bronze plaque, full of scratches and ill maintained (A photo is Annexure II). With the concurrence of the Government of Singapore, the memorial made by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to the "Unknown Soldiers of the Indian National Army" in July 1945 can be easily replicated, as there is sufficient open space there.
- (c) Jim Corbett's tomb in Nyeri (Kenya), situated in the Nyeri cemetery on the Baden- Powell Road is in a deplorable condition. The tomb-stone is broken and the cement layer over the grave has peeled off resulting in water seeping into the remains of this legendary conservationist, writer, among the best known Indians in the English speaking World and hero of Uttarakhand (A photo is Annexure III). With support from the Government of Kenya, a suitable memorial can easily be built here.

Ans / The Secretary

W 7/11/13

JS (Parl & YPF)

11. request our Mission concerned for the same.

Md 17/11

Cont. Page 2..

Dr. 21/11

VIP Cell

R. K. Dr. RANJIT BHARGAVA

D.F.A, Ph.D.

PADMA SHRI

Officer, Order of the Golden Ark (Netherlands)
Ritter, Order of Merit (Germany)



42

Phone : 05942-235713
Mobile: 9235556288

THE HIVE, AYARPATA
NAINITAL-263001
(UTTARAKHAND)

(d) The 1st World War Memorial (partially for Indian soldiers) in Haifa (Isreal, then Palestine), is an inadequate tribute to our glorious acts there. The Jodhpur Lancers on Sept 23, 1918, as part of 5th Cavalry Division of the Desert Mounted Corps captured Haifa from the Turkish-German Forces in the finest cavalry charge evermade- the only incident in Military History where a fortified town was captured by Cavalry-on-gallup. 900 Indian soldiers lost their lives in the Palestine operations and most of them were buried/ cremated in the Haifa cemetery. Presently there is a raised platform as a memorial to the Allied Forces. We need a grand memorial in the Haifa cemetery for our Indian soldiers seperately.

(2) I respectfully suggest that your Ministry, through our Embassies and High Commissions abroad should locate, restore, and build suitable memorials in places/ sites located in their respective jurisdictions, connected with the people and events having a major link with the heritage of India.

All such actions will certainly add to the pride and prestige of India, reaffirm our commitment to our heritage and enrichen these Sites as well.

Knowing your dynamic nature, I am sure you will kick-start this process; which has been ignored for long.

Just all is well. With my very best regards + all good wish

The Hon'ble Shri Salman Khurshid,
Minister for External Affairs,
Government of India,
South Block,
NEW DELHI

Thanking you,
Your's sincerely,

Ranjit

(DR. RANJIT BHARGAVA)
Padma Shri





30/MC/2012
16/3/12

RESTRICTED

सचिव (पूर्व)
SECRETARY (EAST)

12 / Dh C / 12
26/3
विदेश मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली-110 011
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
NEW DELHI-110 011
Phone : 2301 2760 Fax : 2379 4139
E-Mail : secyeast@mea.gov.in

44

No. 1317/S(E)/2012

22 February 2012

Dear Raghavan,

Thank you for inflicting the history tutorial, which was most interesting.

2. Our inability as a nation to accept views other than those we regard as the ultimate truth will remain a burden that Indian diplomats will have to bear. This naturally applies to Netaji and Singapore.

regards

Yours sincerely,


Sanjay Singh

Shri T.C.A. Raghavan
High Commissioner of India
Singapore

~~Dh C~~

CA - del.

45

Pl open a file
entitled "Local
Reservations on
SC Bore / INA" &
keep in that.

~~DPC~~

M. L. Laman
20/2

Jul
20/2

~~CA~~

CA.

316
T.C.A. Raghavan



46
HIGH COMMISSIONER OF INDIA
31 GRANGE ROAD
SINGAPORE 239702
Tel: 62382510 / 62382518 / 62382520
Fax: 67378696
E-mail: hc@hcsingapore.org
Website: www.hcsingapore.com

RESTRICTED

No. SIN/HC/12

February 7, 2012

Dear Secretary,

As you are aware there has always been an undercurrent of strong reservation from many in Singapore with reference to the memory and legacy of Subhas Chandra Bose and the INA. A scrutiny of older files reveals that these sentiments were strong in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This was certainly the case when demands in our Parliament and especially in West Bengal for a memorial to Subhas Chandra Bose and the INA received less than a lukewarm response in Singapore. Government of India on its part also attempted to play down this issue domestically and left the matter to be pursued by people of Indian Origin in Singapore who in themselves form a strong pro-Netaji and INA constituency domestically in Singapore.

2. This policy has worked to some extent and with the passage of time, bitter memories of the Japanese occupation and genocide appeared to have eased. In 1995 the National Heritage Board erected a small memorial to the INA and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. This, to a considerable extent, although not wholly, addressed concerns in India about a suitable memorial for Netaji in Singapore. I say this because from time to time visitors from India have mentioned that the NHB marker is a relatively small one. However, on the whole it had appeared that memories of the Japanese occupation were fading and as such there were signs that the INA's legacy in Singapore was being seen in less contested terms. In July 2011 the then President of Singapore S. R. Nathan presided over a book launch of a new Biography of Netaji by the Harvard Professor Sugata Bose. The former FM George Yeo had also attended this launch. The event was organised by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. The High Commission associated itself with it following a specific request to this effect from Ambassador K. Kesavapany, Director of the Institute of South East Asian Studies.

3. Thereafter a suggestion emerged from the Institute of South East Asian Studies that the High Commission and the Institute should jointly bring a small booklet commemorating Netaji's memory in Singapore as also the book launch function which was presided by the President. Although the High Commission had in part funded this publication (copy enclosed), I had decided that we would not have our name printed as one of the publishers. This was not so much to stay out of domestic controversy in Singapore but rather to avoid getting involved in a

controversy in India. There was a possibility of the latter since there was a tangential reference in George Yeo's foreword to this booklet about Netaji being seen as a Japanese collaborator. On the whole however the booklet has been well received. Our impression therefore was that Netaji's legacy was now seen less in terms of Japanese atrocities in Singapore and was accepted as part of the general anti-colonial history of Asia.

4. However, there has been a recent exchange of angry letters in *The Straits Times* of which I enclose copies. In brief, it is inescapable that Subhas Chandra Bose's legacy in Singapore remains a contested one.

5. I pen this letter for your information because of the light it casts on how a certain aspect of India - Singapore history remains open to multiple readings. It is also useful to underline the fact that as far as Netaji's commemoration and legacy in Singapore is concerned, it is best to let the matter be handled by people of Indian origin in Singapore and not for the Government of India to take any public position unless we are specifically asked to do so. That has been our policy so far and it is a wise one.

6. Finally my apologies for inflicting this history tutorial.

With warm regards
Yours sincerely,

T.C.A. Raghavan

(T.C.A. Raghavan)

Shri Sanjay Singh
Secretary (East)
Ministry of External Affairs
South Block
New Delhi

Encl.:- As above

Copy with enclosures to:-

1. Shri Ranjan Mathai, Foreign Secretary, MEA, South Block, New Delhi.
2. Shri A. K Goel, Joint Secretary (South), MEA, South Block, New Delhi
3. Shri Navdeep Suri, Joint Secretary (PD), MEA, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi

(T.C.A. Raghavan)
High Commissioner

T.C.A. Raghavan



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 Fax: 67378696
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RESTRICTED

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(T.C.A. Raghavan)

Shri Sanjay Singh
Secretary (East)
Ministry of External Affairs
South Block
New Delhi

Encl.: - As above

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3. Shri Navdeep Suri, Joint Secretary (PD), MEA, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi

With regards,

T.C.A. Raghavan
(T.C.A. Raghavan)
High Commissioner

Issued 9/2/12 ok

War monument

"A memorial to the Indian National Army in this vicinity disrespects those who died fighting the Japanese."

DR KEN KWOK, London: "On a recent visit to Singapore, I was walking around the Padang and admiring the sights at the mouth of the Singapore River when I came upon the Cenotaph, and 200m away, the memorial to local World War II hero Lim Bo Seng. I was shocked to see a memorial to the Indian National Army near these monuments. The Cenotaph commemorates Allied servicemen killed in the two world wars. As for Lim, he was martyred in the liberation of Malaya. The Indian National Army, led by Subhas Chandra Bose, consisted mainly of Indian prisoners of war captured by the Japanese, and who then allied themselves to their captors and fought alongside them in Burma (now Myanmar) against the Allies. A memorial to the Indian National Army in this vicinity disrespects those who died fighting the Japanese."

⑤ The Straits Times 02/02/12

Memorial to Indian National Army is appropriate

DR KEN Kwok's sentiments ("War monument: A memorial to the Indian National Army in this vicinity disrespects those who died fighting the Japanese"; Tuesday) are understandable.

The atrocities committed by the Japanese during their wartime occupation of Singapore and Malaya are undeniable. By the same yardstick, the heroic resistance of Lim Bo Seng and others is an ineradicable part of our history.

However, Subhas Chandra Bose, who revitalised the Indian National

Army (INA) in Singapore during the Japanese Occupation, was motivated not by a love of Japanese imperialism, but by hatred of British imperialism in India.

The INA's alliance with the Japanese was tactical - my enemy's enemy is my friend - and not strategic.

Indian prisoners of war were not the only people who joined the INA. Many other Indians, from plantation workers to young women, did so as well.

All of them were driven by a

desire for independence from the British which cut across religion, caste, language, regional affiliations, class and gender.

The charismatic Bose succeeded in bringing them together. He is a part of Singapore's history as much as he is India's.

The memorial to the INA commemorates that unique moment of overlap between those two national histories.

K. Kesavapany
President

Singapore Indian Association

WRITEIN

LETTERS should be meant for exclusive publication in The Straits Times. They should be no longer than 400 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone numbers. The Forum editor reserves the right to edit a letter. For women, please indicate Miss, Ms, Mrs or Madam. Please e-mail your letter to stforum@sph.com.sg or fax it to 6319-8274. You may also mail your letter to us at: The Straits Times Forum editor, Singapore Press Holdings, 1000 Toa Payoh North, News Centre, Podium, Level 2, Singapore 318994.

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- 5 **MR MOHAMMAD YAZID:** Editorial's timely reminder about Egypt
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- 8 **WILDLIFE RESERVES SINGAPORE:** Zoo toilet cleaning contractor reprimanded

Museum is the proper place to recall INA exploits

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pied during World War II. Subhas Chandra Bose's hatred of British imperialism in India bears no relation to Singaporean feelings. Unlike the Japanese military, the British did not torture, maim and kill innocent civilians in Singapore.

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Steven Chua

The Straits Times
04/2/12

58

Memorial appropriate?

"His sentiment runs smack against the sacrifice of Singaporeans of all ethnicities who defended our island with the British, against the Japanese."

MR JACK CHEW: "I fully appreciate Mr K. Kesavapany's sentiment about Indian prisoners of war fighting on the side of the Japanese - that the Indians were involved in an anti-British struggle against colonialism ('Memorial to Indian National Army is appropriate'; Thursday). But his sentiment runs smack against the sacrifice of Singaporeans of all ethnicities who defended our island with the British, against the Japanese. Perhaps the best solution is to move the monument of the Indian National Army to the country where it makes sense, India. The relocation will surely make the victims of the Japanese war in Singapore rest better and at the same time appease the supporters of the Indian National Army for their fight against British colonialism."

Frankly...

"There is no disrespect; it is about embracing all heroes of the war."

MISS UTHRA JAYAKUMAR: "Lim Bo Seng was certainly a hero who fought for the country he believed in ('War monument: A memorial to the Indian National Army in this vicinity disrespects those who died fighting the Japanese' by Dr Ken Kwok; Tuesday). The Indian National Army led by Subhas Chandra Bose may have fought against the Allies, but they were also fighting for a cause they believed in - the freedom of their country. Hence, there is no disrespect in the way these memorials are placed in the same vicinity; it is about Singapore embracing all the heroes of the war."

Puzzling logic

"We shouldn't make such assumptions when many here sacrificed their lives resisting the Japanese."

MR PEH CHWEE HOE: "In trying to theorise what made the Indian National Army (INA) ally with the Japanese during their wartime occupation of Singapore, Mr K. Kesavapany's assumption that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' confounds me ('Memorial to Indian National Army is appropriate'; Thursday). By the same argument, a triad boss who guns down the boss of another triad is a friend of the police and the people. We are uncertain about whether the INA fought alongside the Japanese for the reason cited by Mr Kesavapany, or whether it had simply allied itself with what had then appeared to be the stronger party likeliest to win the war. What is certain is that we shouldn't make such assumptions when many here sacrificed their lives resisting the Japanese. What is also certain is that whichever authority that put up the memorial had not done enough research."

War monument

"A memorial to the Indian National Army in this vicinity disrespects those who died fighting the Japanese."

DR KEN KWOK, London: "On a recent visit to Singapore, I was walking around the Padang and admiring the sights at the mouth of the Singapore River when I came upon the Cenotaph, and 200m away, the memorial to local World War II hero Lim Bo Seng. I was shocked to see a memorial to the Indian National Army near these monuments. The Cenotaph commemorates Allied servicemen killed in the two world wars. As for Lim, he was martyred in the liberation of Malaya. The Indian National Army, led by Subhas Chandra Bose, consisted mainly of Indian prisoners of war captured by the Japanese, and who then allied themselves to their captors and fought alongside them in Burma (now Myanmar) against the Allies. A memorial to the Indian National Army in this vicinity disrespects those who died fighting the Japanese."

Memorial to Indian National Army is appropriate

DR KEN Kwok's sentiments ("War monument: A memorial to the Indian National Army in this vicinity disrespects those who died fighting the Japanese"; Tuesday) are understandable.

The atrocities committed by the Japanese during their wartime occupation of Singapore and Malaya are undeniable. By the same yardstick, the heroic resistance of Lim Bo Seng and others is an ineradicable part of our history.

However, Subhas Chandra Bose, who revitalised the Indian National

Army (INA) in Singapore during the Japanese Occupation, was motivated not by a love of Japanese imperialism, but by hatred of British imperialism in India.

The INA's alliance with the Japanese was tactical - my enemy's enemy is my friend - and not strategic.

Indian prisoners of war were not the only people who joined the INA. Many other Indians, from plantation workers to young women, did so as well.

All of them were driven by a

desire for independence from the British which cut across religion, caste, language, regional affiliations, class and gender.

The charismatic Bose succeeded in bringing them together. He is a part of Singapore's history as much as he is India's.

The memorial to the INA commemorates that unique moment of overlap between those two national histories.

K. Kesavapany

President

Singapore Indian Association

WRITE IN

LETTERS should be meant for exclusive publication in The Straits Times. They should be no longer than 400 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone numbers. The Forum editor reserves the right to edit a letter. For women, please indicate Miss, Ms, Mrs or Madam. Please e-mail your letter to stforum@sph.com.sg or fax it to 6319-8274. You may also mail your letter to us at: The Straits Times Forum editor, Singapore Press Holdings, 1000 Toa Payoh North, News Centre, Podium, Level 2, Singapore 318994.

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INA 'memorial' actually a historical marker, says board

WE THANK Forum readers for the interest shown in the 70th anniversary of the Battle for Singapore.

The fall of Singapore and the subsequent Occupation marked the darkest chapter in Singapore's story, where thousands of lives were lost brutally. Survivors experienced extreme hardship, regardless of race, language or religion.

Some readers have shared their views on the Indian National Army (INA) "memorial" located at the Esplanade Park. It is not a "memorial" dedicated to the INA but a World War II marker erected by the National Heritage Board (NHB) in 1995 in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of the war.

It is thus a historical marker denoting the site of the original INA memorial demolished by the British in 1945 on their return to Singapore, two months after it was erected.

Although several million Indian troops fought World War II as part of the Allied forces, there was a small number in the form of the INA who saw it, at that point in time, as their mission to free India from colonial rule.

The INA marker is one of 14 World War II markers that attempt to be brief but vital points of reference for Singaporeans, providing a holistic picture of the war and its impact on Singapore. Coupled with the NHB's other heritage trails and markers installed around the island, Singaporeans, especially the younger generations, can discover more about our nation's shared history and heritage.

Thangamma Karthigesu (Ms)
Director, Education and Outreach
National Heritage Board

NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

The Singapore Saga





The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre

at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, pursues research on historical interactions among Asian societies and civilizations. It serves as a forum for comprehensive study of the ways in which Asian polities and societies have interacted over time through religious, cultural, and economic exchanges and diasporic networks. The Centre also offers innovative strategies for examining the manifestations of hybridity, convergence and mutual learning in a globalizing Asia.

The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies expresses its deepest gratitude to the following institutions and individuals for making this project possible:

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- Harvard University Press
- Ranjana Sengupta, Joyce Iris Zaide, Aparajita Basu

Front Cover

*INA troops at the Padang, Singapore, 5 July 1943. Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau
Photo of Netaji and newspaper clippings: Courtesy ISEAS Library*

Back Cover

21 October 1943, Subhas Chandra Bose proclaiming the formation of the Provisional Government of Free India at Singapore's Cathay Cinema. Photo: Courtesy ISEAS Library.

NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

The Singapore Saga

Selected writings, rare photographs, oral history and archival documents on Subhas Chandra Bose and Singapore's role in the struggle for India's freedom



Singapore, 1943. Netaji reviews INA troops. Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau.

Subhas Chandra Bose and Singapore

GEORGE YEO

Former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore

Many non-Indian Singaporeans are unaware of the role Singapore played in the independence struggle of India. Some, especially Chinese Singaporeans, saw Netaji as a Japanese collaborator. In a sense he was. The Japanese Army removed Mohan Singh to clear the way for Netaji's rise as the leader of the Indian National Army. (Incidentally, Mohan Singh was incarcerated in a small prison on Pulau Ubin which still stands today but is now temporarily used as a seafood restaurant.)

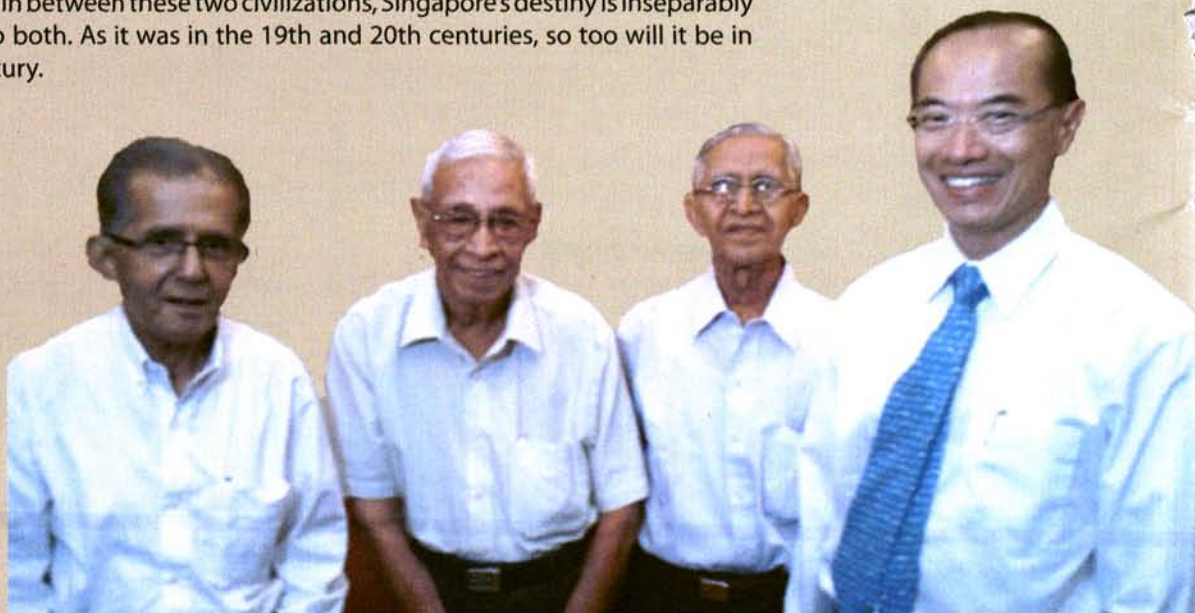
Netaji's role in threatening the Raj by military force was a necessary complement to Gandhi's non-violent struggle. The British knew that if they did not grant India freedom, they would eventually be forced out. Persisting in the prosecution of INA soldiers after the War would only make their position in India worse.

With the detachment of time, Netaji's role in the independence of India is increasingly acknowledged across Indian society. Singaporeans are also increasingly aware and proud of the part Singapore played in that big story. It runs strangely parallel to the part Singapore played in another big story – the 1911 Revolution in China – the Centennial of which we celebrate this year. History brought two great historical figures to Singapore, Dr Sun Yat-Sen and Subhas Chandra Bose, and Singapore became a base for their monumental exertions, one to the east and the other to our west.

This was not twice an accident. Because of its geographical and cultural position in between these two civilizations, Singapore's destiny is inseparably linked to both. As it was in the 19th and 20th centuries, so too will it be in this century.

*From left:
INA veterans
Bala Chandran, Kishore
Bhattacharya and Girish
Kothari with George Yeo
at the launch of
Sugata Bose's new
biography of Netaji, His
Majesty's Opponent.*

*Photo:
Madan Kunnavakkam*



Contents

4	Foreword George Yeo
5	Message K Kesavapany
6	Preface Tansen Sen
7	Introduction Nilanjana Sengupta
10	His appeal cut across religious, caste and linguistic lines SR Nathan
11	In Bose's life story, Singapore was an important platform TCA Raghavan
12	Remembering Bose in Singapore Kwa Chong Guan
14	In his Footsteps... Krishna Bose
18	The Rani of Jhansi Regiment Joyce Chapman Lebra
22	A Rani on Horseback Nilanjana Sengupta
24	Roads to Delhi Sugata Bose
26	Through the Archives Photographs, newspaper clippings, documents, etc. on the INA in Singapore
34	Select Bibliography

Bose and the linked histories of Singapore and India

K KESAVAPANY

Director, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

The history of modern Singapore begins with Stamford Raffles going to Calcutta and receiving the East India Company's permission to set up a trading base on the island. However, this is only half the story. The other half begins with Subhas Chandra Bose revitalizing the Indian National Army in Singapore to fight British colonialism in India. The landings by Raffles and Bose – in 1819 and 1943 respectively – are the two most critical events in the history of Singapore before its independence in 1965. The two earlier dates tie together inextricably the histories of India and Singapore.

It was at the Padang in Singapore that Bose mesmerized and motivated Indians to join the military quest for India's independence. His marching call, "Chalo Delhi", gave meaning to their downtrodden lives and unfulfilled imaginations in colonial Singapore and Malaya. What is striking is that he managed to cut across religious, linguistic, regional and gender divisions and give his followers an inclusive sense of Indianness.

Tellingly, the Indian National Army recruited Indians outside the martial races who, the British believed, were the only capable sources of military valour. The Rani of Jhansi Regiment destroyed the final divide and gave women the confidence and capacity to fight alongside men. This was a truly revolutionary endeavour.

That Pandit Nehru laid a wreath at the site of the INA memorial during his visit to Singapore in 1946 suggests the importance of Bose and his INA in the Indian freedom struggle. It also reflects the historical linkages between Singapore and India.



Singapore and Calcutta

TANSEN SEN

Head, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at ISEAS

In 1826, Singapore became part of the Straits Settlements following the Anglo-Dutch Treaty signed two years earlier. In 1830, it was officially placed under the Presidency of Bengal and thus within the administration of the British East India Company. In fact, British control of the port started in 1819, when a British East India Company official named Thomas Stamford Raffles reached an agreement with the local officials to allow a British trading outpost to be established at Singapore. With the placing of the territory under the Presidency of Bengal, Calcutta (Kolkata), then the capital of British India, not only acquired administrative control over Singapore, but also became intimately linked to the Southeast Asian port through commercial and cultural activities.

On one hand, Singapore was the main transit centre for opium, cotton and other goods exported from Calcutta to China, as well as a penal settlement for Indian political prisoners and other criminals prosecuted by the Bengal government. On the other hand, Singapore and Calcutta were connected through the missionary work by followers of various faiths and movements of immigrant groups, especially those belonging to the Baghdadi Jews and the Parsi communities. David Marshall, the first chief minister of Singapore, for example, was a descendant of Jewish immigrants from Calcutta. Moreover, during the Japanese Occupation, prominent Malaysians and Singaporeans such as Lim Bo Seng, Albert Foo Yin Chiew, and Tan Chin Tuan evacuated to Calcutta. With other evacuees in India, some of these people discussed the plans for post-War reconstruction of the Malayan region. As Sunanda Dutta-Ray has pointed out in his seminal work *Looking East to Look West: Lee Kuan Yew's Mission India*, Calcutta's connection to Singapore also

included the minting of Singapore dollars in the Indian city, the establishment of the first Singapore bank by the Union Bank of Calcutta, and the founding of Singapore's major English-language newspaper, *The Straits Times*, in 1845, by Catchick Moses, a Calcutta Armenian.

The highlights of Singapore's connections to Calcutta, and Bengal in general, were no doubt the visit by Rabindranath Tagore in 1927 and the establishment of the Indian National Army base in Singapore by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in 1943. Both Tagore and Bose are regarded as heroes by Bengalis worldwide. Tagore's six-day visit to Singapore put him in contact with a key individual named Tan Yunshan, then a teacher at a local Chinese school, who later helped establish the first China studies centre at Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan. Bose's efforts in Singapore provided new impetus to India's freedom struggle.

Unlike Tagore, however, the legacy of Bose in Singapore is somewhat ambiguous, as can be discerned from George Yeo's Foreword to this volume. He correctly points out that many non-Indian Singaporeans are unaware of the role Singapore played in India's freedom movement. Indeed, while Indians in Singapore – the former British army conscripts, the indentured labourers, and other Indian immigrants who joined the Indian National Army – saw Bose as the leader of an Indian nationalist movement, the local Chinese were more concerned about the spread of Japanese imperialism. Many of them looked at Bose and the Indian National Army through the prisms of Japanese colonialism and brutality.

But, Bose himself had been critical of the means the Japanese used to confront Western imperialism. In 1937, commenting on the Japanese Occupation in China, Bose wrote, "But could not all this have been

achieved without Imperialism, without dismembering the Chinese Republic, without humiliating another proud, cultured and ancient race? No, with all our admiration for Japan, where such admiration is due, our whole heart goes to China in her hour of trial." He concluded by stating, "Standing at the threshold of a new era, let India resolve to aspire after national self-fulfillment in every direction — but not at the expense of other nations and not through the bloody path of self-aggrandisement and imperialism." Singaporeans are generally unaware of Bose's critique of Japanese imperialism.

As the Singapore minister of foreign affairs, George Yeo had discussed with his then Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee "the formation of a group to study, in a contemporary context, the heritage of Bose and the Indian National Army in Singapore." This booklet and the forthcoming monograph by the editor of this volume, Nilanjana Sengupta, entitled *A Gentleman's Word: The Legacy of Subhas Chandra Bose in Southeast Asia*, attempt to begin such examination of the heritage of Bose in Singapore.

This booklet is also part of the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre's efforts to study the interactions between Singapore and India through the examination of archival material in India and Southeast Asia. In fact, on the dusty shelves of the West Bengal State Archives there is a huge range of files and books that are essential materials for studying the crucial relationship between Singapore and Calcutta during the colonial period. They await in-depth exploration and study. There are also unexplored materials in the National Archives of Singapore that will help us more fully understand the dynamic and multi-faceted interactions between Singapore and Calcutta.



In his last note addressed to the Indians of East Asia, who had stood by him through the initial euphoria and the subsequent despondency of defeat, Netaji held out a promise: "The roads to Delhi are many and Delhi still remains our goal... India shall be free and before long." The words have come to personify an indomitable human spirit in the face of impossible odds.

Municipal Building (now City Hall) to address the "Soldiers of India's Army of Liberation". Some 12,000 soldiers of the Indian National Army (INA) as well as a rapturous crowd of civilians had gathered to hear his historic speech: "Let your battle-cry be 'To Delhi! To Delhi!' How many of us will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know. But I do know this ... our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the victory parade on another graveyard of the British Empire – Lal Kila...of ancient Delhi."⁸ SR Nathan, former President of Singapore, who was present on the day, recalls the slight drizzle that started midway through the speech. Netaji ("Respected leader") was not too pleased when some from the audience got restive and looked for shelter.⁹ Soon after, on 12 July, Bose fulfilled a long cherished dream and addressed the first recruits of the all-women Rani of Jhansi Regiment (RJR).

The 5 July parade set an important precedent. In the subsequent months, Netaji's journeys criss-crossed Southeast Asia, taking him to Malaya, Burma, Indonesia, Thailand and French Indochina. Everywhere the trend was noticeably uniform: he spoke in stirring English or Hindustani, rapidly translated into Tamil for the large Tamil-speaking diaspora and the audience responded with equal fervour, committing their services and material possessions to the nationalist cause. These larger-than-life INA rallies left a trail of memories and find repeated mention in oral history records. It was a time when Indian households took pride in hoisting the tri-coloured flag and in a fascinating story, *Syonan Sinbun* reports that some Indians looked upon Bose as the "Lord Krishna of the moment" who had appeared to scourge the evils of colonialism.¹⁰

As Netaji's powerful campaigns continued, the number of volunteers to the cause soared. Some 18,000 civilians¹⁰ enlisted for the INA while thousands joined the IIL's branch offices in support functions. The Indian POWs who had not committed their allegiance to the INA in

1942, under the leadership of Mohan Singh, were now "swept off their feet" and took the combined strength of the INA to more than 40,000.¹¹ There were many families where the parents joined the INA and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, while the younger ones signed up with the Balak Sena. Professor Wang Gungwu recalls his childhood acquaintances, Rasammah Bhupalan and her sister who left their home in Ipoh to enlist with the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.¹²

On 21 October 1943 in Singapore, Bose proclaimed the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. Yet again the Cathay Theatre was filled to capacity as Netaji and his Cabinet of ministers took the oath of allegiance. In a voice choked with emotions the leader declared, "In the name of God, I take this sacred oath – that to liberate India and the 38 crores of my countrymen, I, Subhas Chandra Bose, will continue this sacred war of freedom till the last breath of my life."¹³ The organizational structure of the Provisional Government included in this volume (p. 27), is taken from the writings of SA Ayer and depicts the ministries as well as IIL's territorial spread across the countries of Southeast Asia.¹⁴ The Provisional Government soon received diplomatic recognition from nine states of the Axis powers – this would bequeath a constitutional legitimacy to the new government and help strengthen the INA's case at the subsequent Red Fort Trials held by the British in India.

By mid-1945, Netaji returned to Singapore after an extended period spent on the Indo-Burmese battlefield. The tides of war had turned against the Axis Powers: in Europe the Germans had been decisively defeated while in Asia the end of Japanese Occupation seemed imminent. Bose returned, leading the women of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment to safety, after a horrifying retreat through the jungles and monsoon-swollen rivers of Burma. Though the war was obviously drawing to a close, for him India's independence movement was not yet finished. On 4 July, the

anniversary of his taking over leadership of the movement, he addressed a large gathering in Singapore and on 8 July, laid the foundation stone of the INA martyr's memorial at the Singapore seafont. But with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the war came to a sudden end and on 16 August 1945, Subhas Chandra Bose left Singapore on a final journey-of-no-return with three of his close compatriots. They travelled first to Bangkok and then to Saigon. On 17 August he left Saigon aboard a Japanese Air Force bomber, accompanied by his deputy chief of staff, Habibur Rahman. They transitted at the Taipei airport for refuelling. The engine of the aircraft had been giving trouble and, soon after the plane was airborne, there was a loud explosion and it tilted to the left and eventually crashed not far from the runway. Netaji, who suffered serious burn injuries while struggling out of the fateful aircraft, breathed his last on 18 August, at a hospital in Taipei: he was yet to turn 49.

In his last note addressed to the Indians of East Asia, who had stood by him through the initial euphoria and the subsequent despondency of defeat, Netaji held out a promise: "The roads to Delhi are many and Delhi still remains our goal... India shall be free and before long."¹⁵ The words have come to personify an indomitable human spirit in the face of impossible odds. The INA movement met with apparent failure in the campaigns of 1945 and yet managed to leave a legacy for India and the Indians of Southeast Asia as they struggled to shed their colonial status. As the Japanese surrendered and the INA was disbanded, a large number of the troops were repatriated to India. The Red Fort trials of the trio – Shah Nawaz Khan, Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon and Prem Kumar Sahgal, held at Delhi in November 1945, triggered powerful public resentment which soon spread to units of the British Indian Army, ultimately leading to the subversion of Indian loyalty to this supreme tool of British hegemony in Asia: the Army could not be used to suppress the indigenous

A City and a Soldier: Netaji in Singapore

NILANJANA SENGUPTA

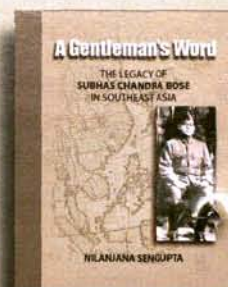
Visiting Research Fellow, ISEAS

On 6 May 1943 Subhas Chandra Bose arrived by submarine at Sabang, an isolated islet off the coast of Sumatra. Plans of disembarking at the more populous Penang had to be discarded because some Japanese codes had been intercepted by the Allies. His long and arduous journey had lasted almost three months and taken Bose and his adjutant Abid Hasan, halfway across the globe, first in German and then Japanese submarines. Hasan wrote that as he stepped aboard the German U-boat, the envisaged romance of travelling by a submarine fast dissipated: Bose was allotted a bunk in an unenclosed recess in the passage and the "stench of diesel" permeated the air.¹ Emilie Schenkl came to Berlin to bid them goodbye. For Bose, after their long and committed relationship for the previous ten years and the recent birth of his daughter, Anita, it must have been an emotionally difficult parting.² But as their vessel moved underwater, surfacing only at night to recharge batteries, the leader put in long hours of work preparing for the Indian nationalist struggle that he was to spearhead in Southeast Asia, undeterred by physical or emotional adversities.

Almost immediately on arrival, Bose departed for Tokyo, from where was transmitted his first radio messages after a lapse of several months. These messages contributed to the sense of anticipation that preceded his eventual landing at Singapore on 2 July 1943. The drum roll of his impending arrival was heard in the newspapers of the time. Japanese-run *Syonan Times* hailed



The crew of the Japanese submarine in 1943. Abid Hasan and Bose are in the front row, extreme left. Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau.



Forthcoming book on Netaji by Nilanjana Sengupta, to be published by ISEAS

him as the "Idol of Indian Youth"³ and carried double column headlines announcing his participation in the Indian Freedom Movement: "Subhas Chandra Bose coming...to take active part in Indian Independence move... announcement of arrival in Tokyo signal of victory...The Indian Independence Movement in Toa [East Asia] has the powerful support of Nippon...But it is a movement organised and carried on by the sons and daughters of India who are free citizens of Toa."⁴ News of his radio broadcasts in English and Hindustani, to be aired on "225 metres" also received publicity. Janaki Davar, living at Rifle Range, Kuala Lumpur heard of his coming via the local bush-telegraph⁵ while Bala A Chandran, who would join the Balak Sena, had the news read out to him by his mother from the Malayalam paper, *Kerala Bandhu*.⁶ From this time till January 1944, when the advance headquarters of the Provisional Government were moved to Rangoon, and again for a period towards the end of the war in 1945, Singapore would remain the heartland of Bose's anti-colonial campaign.

On 4 July 1943 Bose made his first public appearance at the Cathay Theatre in Singapore and invited all his countrymen from "East Asia, to line up in one solid phalanx under one leadership and prepare for the grim fight" that lay ahead.⁷ This was also the last time he was seen in civilian attire as he formally accepted the leadership of the Indian Independence League (IIL) from the veteran leader, Rashbehari Bose. The following day, on 5 July Subhas Chandra Bose appeared at the Singapore Padang, opposite the

nationalist movements which had sprung up in parts of Southeast Asia as effectively as it had been done before. Participation in the nationalist struggle invested the resident Indian community of Southeast Asia with a rare sense of dignity and fostered a mushrooming of militant trade unions, making it difficult for the returning British planters to perpetuate their control over what had once been a docile workforce. At the INA camps Indian society came together in a powerful alchemy of new ideas and political views as the partisans were exposed to not only nationalism but diverse radical schools of political thought.¹⁶ The Rani of Jhansi movement proved to be a pioneering effort at drawing Indian women out of their veiled image - inspiring some of them to take up mainstream roles for causes of equality and emancipation. Subhas Chandra Bose became a role model for a new generation of Asian leaders, many of whom were inspired by his oratory skills and advocacy of militancy.

In this slim volume being published by the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, we attempt to recapture the spirit of the movement which Bose unleashed in Singapore. In his narrative, Kwa Chong Guan dwells on the different layers of memories that Bose evokes - the official, the personal and the objective reconstruction of history by academia. In Krishna Bose's delightful essay, the past and present seamlessly merge as she writes of her personal travels through Singapore, in pursuit of the invisible "Freedom Trail". Joyce Chapman Lebra, after her substantive research on the INA and the RJR, offers fascinating details on the all-women regiment that Netaji raised. We round up the essays with a brief excerpt from Sugata Bose's recent publication, *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle Against Empire*. The piece deftly captures the rich panoply of thought that contributes to the texture of the biography: it begins with the rationale in Bose's contentious alliance with the Japanese, describes the very symbolic handing over of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands by the Japanese to the Provincial Government of Azad Hind and ends on a poignant note with a radio message transmitted to Bose, conveying the news of his mother, Prabhavati Devi's death in Calcutta.



Janaki Davar leads a Guard of Honour for Netaji.
Photo: Courtesy Janaki Nahappan.

The final section puts together accessible archival material available on Bose - the oral history recordings, photographs, newspaper clippings, propaganda leaflets and letters that shed fresh light on a turbulent period which proved to be a turning point in Asia's shared history. The interviews with the veterans of the INA and Rani of Jhansi Regiment reveal a very different Singapore - it was a time of kampongs and vegetable farms in Bukit Timah, when the Azad Hind Radio was located at the Cathay building, when the INA men went for morning runs on Dunearn Road and the "Ranis" marched down Bras Basah!

This volume is further enriched by extracts of speeches by SR Nathan, former President of Singapore, and TCA Raghavan, High Commissioner of India in Singapore, at the launch of Sugata Bose's definitive biography of Subhas Chandra Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent*, and by the Foreword by George Yeo, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Singapore.

Subhas Chandra Bose during his Cambridge days in England was wont to recite a slightly modified version of Kipling's verse -

"There is but one task for all-
One life for each to give.
What stands if freedom fall?
Who dies if India live?"

- lines that capture perfectly the essence of the ideal by which he would lead his future life.

NOTES

1. Abid Hasan, "A Soldier Remembers", *The Oracle*, January 1984, Calcutta: NRB, p. 53.
2. Anita Bose, Subhas Chandra Bose's only child, was born in November 1942.
3. *Syonan Times*, 19 June 1943.
4. *Syonan Times*, 21 June 1943.
5. Interview with Janaki Athi Nahappan, Kuala Lumpur, 23 September 2011.
6. Interview with Bala A Chandran, Singapore, 15 September 2011.
7. "Chalo Delhi, 1943-45", *Netaji Collected Works, Volume 12*, Calcutta: NRB, p. 39.
8. "Chalo Delhi, 1943-45", pp. 45-48.
9. SR Nathan, *An Unexpected Journey: Path to the Presidency, Singapore*, EDM, 2011, p. 105.
10. *Syonan Sinbun*, 29 October 1943.
11. Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent*, Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, pp. 246, 251.
12. Interview with Professor Wang Gungwu, Singapore, 20 September 2011.
13. "Chalo Delhi, 1943-45", p. 117.
14. SA Ayer was a journalist who became the Minister of Publicity and Propaganda with the Provisional Government. His book, *Unto Him a Witness* narrates his first-hand experiences of the time.
15. "Chalo Delhi, 1943-45", pp. 407-410.
16. Many of the veterans interviewed for this volume recall being exposed in their INA days to the writings of Bernard Shaw, Marx, Lenin and Fabian Society publications.



His appeal cut across religious, caste and linguistic lines

SR NATHAN

Former President, Republic of Singapore

Subhas Chandra Bose was a sworn enemy of the British Raj although he could have enjoyed more than a comfortable career in the prestigious Indian Civil Service (ICS) of colonial India. He was an alumnus of Calcutta's prestigious Presidency College and of Cambridge University, who excelled in his studies. But he resigned from the ICS on principle, committed as he was to struggle against British rule in India. What he is also remembered for is the election he won to become the President of the Indian National Congress in 1939, defeating the nominee of Mahatma Gandhi.

With his arrival in Singapore in July 1943, he revitalized the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army (INA) that had been earlier formed by Captain, later General, Mohan Singh. On 4 July that year, he rose to the leadership of the Indian freedom movement based in Southeast Asia. In rallying support for his cause in Southeast Asia, he offered to those prepared to follow him "nothing but hunger, thirst, privation, forced marches and death", and announced to the whole world that India's army of liberation had come into being. In October that year, he proclaimed the formation of the Azad Hind, or Provisional Government of Free India, in Singapore.

What I remember of him, was when he appeared at his first public rally, organised to welcome him in Singapore in early July 1943. Being Straits-born and very much a product of the British education system, I received my first political education and an eye-opener to what the Indian struggle was about. From that speech my perspective of British rule, even in Malaya, took an opposite turn and has remained so to this day.

Bose's exemplary character did play an important role in his extraordinary appeal to the Indians in occupied Southeast Asia. His charismatic personality does not explain all of the public adulation that he aroused in Singapore and beyond. Scholars write that his presence marked the real dawn of mass anti-British politics in Malaya. People flocked to hear him, donated money, jewellery or pocket money, and took up his cause. With his inspiration, docile and subservient Indian workers rose in self-confidence and discipline to become part of his INA and saw action in the Burma/India Front. His appeal cut across religious, caste and linguistic lines so much a part of Indian society then. He brought women into the mainstream of the armed struggle against the British through the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

Although the INA did not succeed in reaching the destination that Netaji desired – "Chalo Delhi", or "Onward to Delhi" – historians acknowledge that it contributed decisively to the Independence that India finally achieved in 1947. Singapore's role as the launching pad of his struggle and the INA's ultimately successful anti-colonial march is a fact of history that relates this country closely to India's Independence struggle.

In this book, Professor Sugata Bose describes the INA segment of Netaji's political and military journey with historical passion and literary élan. In fact, these are the defining characteristics of the book as a whole. Professor Bose, despite being a close family member of Subhas Chandra Bose, has written this book with the same scholarly detachment that he brings to bear on his work as a leading historian at Harvard. I am confident that readers of this book will enjoy the fascinating story that unfolds within its pages.



These speeches were delivered at the launch of *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle Against Empire* by Sugata Bose, in Singapore on 5 July 2011. The venue of the launch overlooked the Padang where Netaji made his stirring speech on 5 July 1943. An excerpt of Sugata Bose's book appears on page 24.

In Bose's life story, Singapore was an important platform

TCA RAGHAVAN

High Commissioner of India, Singapore

Subhas Chandra Bose, or Netaji, occupies a unique space in Indian political history.

In Subhas Chandra Bose's life story, Singapore was not just an important milestone, but also an important platform. Your presence here today, Mr President, gives our understanding of that period of our history a certain completeness and finality. It is also symbolic both of Singapore's special place in the biography and history of Subhas Chandra Bose as also of his own extraordinary personality and sense of national service.

In writing this biography, Sugata Bose has accomplished two important things. Firstly, he has filled a large gap in our knowledge of Indian politics and the national movement by adding a rigorous biography of Bose to the existing literature.

Secondly, I believe that this work will catalyze more biographies of our historical personages, and thereby animate our history. Prof Bose has therefore achieved that double milestone which all professional historians strive for: A good work of history which is also a trendsetter in historiographical terms.

Finally, may I thank the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. One day in the future, when the full history of India's Look East policy is written, I am sure that the ISEAS and the scholars and researchers who are associated with it will find a full recognition of what their scholarly efforts yielded.



BOOK LAUNCH

From left:
Salman Khurshid, India's
Law Minister; Prof
Sugata Bose; SR Nathan,
former President of
Singapore; Ambassador
K Kesavapany, ISEAS
Director; and Dr TCA
Raghavan, High
Commissioner of India in
Singapore. Photo by
Joyce Iris Zaide.

Remembering Bose in Singapore

KWA CHONG GUAN

*Chairman, National Archives Board,
Singapore*

On 15 July 1995, S Dhanabalan, the Member of Parliament for Toa Payoh GRC unveiled a plaque at the Esplanade Park, marking the site where an older World War II memorial erected by the Indian National Army once stood. The plaque reads:

In the final months of the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, a memorial dedicated to the 'Unknown Warrior' of the Indian National Army (INA) was constructed at this site.

The local INA was formed in 1942 with Japanese support. It sought to liberate India from the British and consisted mainly of prisoners-of-war from the British Indian Army. Subhas Chandra Bose, who led the INA from 1943 onwards, laid a foundation stone at the monument in July 1945. The Urdu words inscribed on the Monument read: ITTEFAQ (Unity), ITMAD (Faith) and KURBANI (Sacrifice).

When the British returned to Singapore, they demolished the memorial barely two months after its installation.

Official Remembering of Bose

This marking of the site of the World War II INA memorial by the National Heritage Board was part of a wider project that marked eleven World War II sites in Singapore. Other locations marked included the beaches at Kranji on the north-west coast of Singapore where Japanese forces landed, sites of major battles at Bukit Panjang and on Kent Ridge and also the places in the city where the Japanese gathered the male Chinese population for screening for anti-Japanese activities.

This marking of key World War II sites in 1995 continued a longer programme of commemorating World War II as a major turning point of Singapore's historical development. In 1992 the old National

Museum (of which I was then the Director) organized a major exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of the start of the Japanese invasion of Malaya and Singapore. Concurrent exhibitions were organized by the Singapore Armed Forces at their old Beach Road Camp, home of the Singapore Volunteers' Corps, commemorating the contribution of the volunteers to the defence of Singapore; and the public opening by the Singapore Heritage Society of the old Ford factory on Bukit Timah Road where General AE Percival surrendered to General Yamashita.

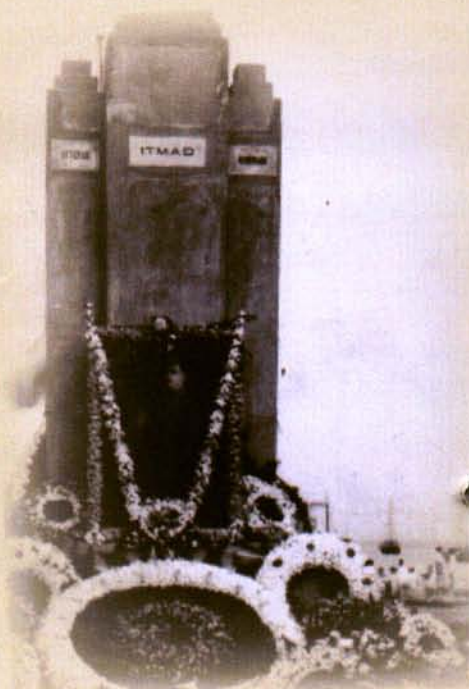
Bose and the INA he led were remembered at a level of deeper reflections about Singapore's shared histories with the region in a 2003 National Archives exhibition entitled *Chalo Delhi: The Historical Journey of the Indian National Army*, organized with the support of the National Archives of India. The exhibition outlined the British India background to the Indian nationalist struggles and how their militant strategy challenged MK Gandhi's more pacifist approach in the nationalist struggle for independence. Subsequent sections of the exhibition traced the establishment of the second

INA in Singapore under Bose, and also the establishment of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. A major part of the exhibition examined the INA's campaign to go "Onward to Delhi" (*Chalo Delhi*), as its slogan proclaimed. The underlying intent of the exhibition was, as the National Archives of Singapore stated, to show "the historical journey of the INA and its role in India's struggle for freedom. The INA episode demonstrates the common cause that was forged in the 1940s between the nationalists in India and their compatriots in Singapore."

Social Memories of Netaji

These official and public rememberings of Subhas Chandra Bose's time in Singapore is derived in part from a more extensive network of social memories of an older generation of Indians who personally saw and heard Bose or Netaji as they named him, and were then drawn to support the Indian Independence League and the INA he led. The social memories of this older generation of Indians resident in Singapore were first captured in an oral history project undertaken by the Oral History Centre in the 1980s. The Centre was established in 1979 under the aegis of the National

Bose laid a foundation stone at the monument in July 1945. The Urdu words inscribed on it read *ittefaq* (unity), *itmada* (faith) and *kurbani* (sacrifice). When the British returned to Singapore, they demolished the memorial barely two months after its installation.



*The original INA monument.
Photo: Courtesy National Archives of Singapore*

Archives to interview people who had personally witnessed or participated in the key events or institutions that define Singapore history, especially of events for which there is scant and fragmentary documentary records. Documenting the Japanese Occupation through the social memories of those who lived through it became a major project of the Oral History Centre. The several hundred hours of interviews with scores of interviewees not only Singapore residents, but also Allied prisoners-of-war and Japanese officials and military commanders, now constitutes a substantive archival record of the Occupation. The information in these interviews enabled the Archives to mount a successful exhibition on the Japanese Occupation of Singapore in 1985, and in 2006 to install a permanent exhibition on the Occupation in the old Ford Factory.

A pervasive theme in almost all the interviews with Indians was the emotional impact which hearing and meeting Netaji had on them. Several decades later, their memories of Netaji are still vivid. Here are some memories from people who remember Netaji's rally at Singapore's Padang in 1943:

Narayana Karupiah (then 17): "...it was a grand meeting. Most of the Indians were at the Padang. And while he was addressing us, there was a heavy rain. And some people brought an umbrella to put on his head. Immediately he smacked and threw off the umbrella. It was also raining, he was standing in the rain. And the people also were in the rain. They did not move even an inch. And we were there until he completed his speech. It was a really long speech, if I am not mistaken a two or three hour speech. It was really a magnetic speech."

Damodaran: "The whole Padang was full of people, the whole Padang. And it happened to be a very heavy rain...And I very well remember, somebody hold an umbrella to Netaji. So, he brushed it away and asked, 'Can you provide umbrellas for all these people?'"

Oh, that meeting was over and heavy rain, we all walked back home, from Padang right up to Nelson Road we walked."

Joginder Singh (then 24): "...when Subhas Chandra Bose spoke, women

would simply remove their gold jewellery and threw [them] at his feet. That was their contribution toward his war effort. He was a very impressive speaker, very fiery and he held the crowd in his control, nobody moved until he finished speaking."

These oral history interviews capture the drama of a personal experience with Bose and make for a more personal understanding and remembering of Bose in Singapore than is contained in the fragmentary documentary sources.

Academic Reconstructions of Bose

Over and above the public and official remembering of Bose and the social memories of those who personally experienced him, are the academic reconstructions of how Bose should be remembered on the basis of the extant evidence making for a verifiable and objective account of Bose. Sugata Bose's epic biography of Netaji, entitled *His Majesty's Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle against Empire* offers an insight into locating the INA leader in the context of Indian and British Empire history. But for Southeast Asia and Singapore, the scholarly accounting of Bose and the Indian National Army is about the tension between the INA as the rallying point of the Indian diaspora's hopes for the motherland and the INA as but one of the numerous volunteer and personal armies established and trained by the Japanese as part of their war strategy of building resistance groups against the returning Allies. Joyce Chapman

Lebra's work *Japanese Trained Armies in Southeast Asia*, recently reprinted by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies is still the benchmark study in this area.

In summary, there are then at least three different rememberings of Bose in Singapore. These are the official public remembering of Bose in the context of Singapore's World War II history and shared histories with the region, and second, the personal social memories of a generation of Indian residents drawn to Bose and the INA as a vehicle for their hopes for India. The third is the academic reconstruction of a precise and objective narrative of the time Bose spent in Singapore.

LINKS

Oral history interviews, alongside other archival material on Netaji and Singapore related topics can be searched at the 'Access to Archives Online' website at www.a2o.com.sg.

Archival Resources concerning Singapore's war-time experiences can be accessed at www.s1942.org.sg

See p. 26 of this volume for more archival material.



Kwa Chong Guan is a co-author of Singapore: A 700-year History: From Early Emporium to World City and editor of S Rajaratnam on Singapore: From Ideas to Reality. More recently he co-edited China-ASEAN Sub-Regional Cooperation: Progress, Problems and Prospects and also Goh Keng Swee: A Public Career Remembered.



'Chalo Delhi' or Onward to Delhi was the Indian National Army's slogan. Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau

In his Footsteps...

KRISHNA BOSE

Chairperson, Netaji Research Bureau, Kolkata

During the night of 19-20 October 1943, Netaji wrote the Proclamation of the Provisional Government of Free India. He had a keen sense of humour and announced that all the signatories to the proclamation of Irish Independence were later shot dead. "Who knows what destiny has in store for us?", he said and burst into laughter.

Singapore played a prominent role in India's last war of Independence. During the Second World War, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose established the Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) in Singapore and there gave his stirring call, 'Chalo Delhi' to the Indian National Army. The INA or Azad Hind Fauj began its march towards India, determined to liberate it from British rule. Netaji had arrived in Singapore on 2 July 1943 to a tumultuous welcome. The song, 'Subhasji, Subhasji' that greeted him, proclaimed to the world that the light of Asia had arrived to liberate India and with his arrival there was new hope for the regeneration of Asia.

My first visit to Singapore was in November 1979. The city had changed since the war. But the history of India's freedom struggle still seemed to be strewn all over Singapore. In Boston, there is a 'Freedom Trail' marked in red, which visitors follow to see the landmarks of the American War of Independence. On that visit to Singapore, my husband Sisir Kumar Bose and I, seemed to follow an invisible Freedom Trail, which took us to all the historic sites connected with the memory of the great freedom fighter. It was like leafing through a history book.

Sidhatmanandaji, the Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, told us: "You must begin with the Mission of Singapore." He did not mean the mission building in which we were sitting with him. We were staying at the Ramakrishna Mission guest house, under the affectionate care of Swamiji. This was a new building. The old Ramakrishna Mission building still existed with its puja room and Lecture Hall, which Netaji had frequently visited. On our arrival at the old ashram at Norris Road, Sthitanandaji took charge and showed us around.

First we went to the puja room. It was still in use. The smell of flowers and 'dhup' (incense) gave me an eerie feeling. I had

heard so much about Netaji's late-night visits to this room from SA Ayer and Abid Hasan. Both said he looked remarkably serene and calm when he emerged from his meditations.

SA Ayer had told us that Netaji was not a religious man in the ordinary sense of the term. But he had a deep spiritual faith. It was this faith that sustained him in times of crisis. Everyone knew he carried a small *Gita* and a rosary of *rudraksha* beads with him. But nobody ever saw him perform any religious rites in public. Faced with a crisis in the war situation, he would simply go to the puja room, take off his uniform, put on a silk dhoti and sit down in meditation. When he emerged he passed on a healing touch to Ayer, Abid and others. At times, they too were under great stress.

One fine morning in Singapore, we stood before a closed gate on Meyer Road. We could see the lawn and an impressive two-storey building beyond the gate. My guides were hesitant about going in without permission. Impatient at their hesitation, I just pushed the gate and marched in, amidst a chorus of protests from behind, "Take care, there may be dogs inside!" The lawn was not very well-maintained. Thorny grass got caught in my sari. Netaji used to play badminton here with his colleagues or Raju, his personal doctor. There was a stone table with stone chairs around it. I visualized Netaji: tired after a game resting there with a cup of tea.

I had focused my camera for a shot of the house when suddenly the house came alive. There was laughter and the sound of footsteps. The front door opened with a bang and a Chinese couple and two children walked straight into my camera's view. I told them that long ago a relative had lived in this house and asked if we could just look around. The gentleman recovered from his initial surprise and said, "Oh yes, go ahead." The family got into a car and drove out. Silence gripped the house again.

In this house Netaji had resided as the Head of the Provisional Government of Free India. During the night of 19-20 October 1943 he had written the Proclamation of that Government, sitting in the same house. SA Ayer, in his writings, has recounted that historic night. Netaji sipped black coffee and continued to write in long hand. Abid Hasan and NG Swami took turns to bring the pages to Ayer who went on typing. At the break of dawn the proclamation was ready.

The next day Netaji gave Ayer the full list of signatories to the document. Netaji had always had a keen sense of humour and told them that all the signatories to the proclamation of Irish Independence were later shot dead. "Who knows what destiny has in store for us?", he said and burst into laughter.

Our Freedom Trail led us next to the Cathay Cinema. On 21 October 1943, Netaji read out the proclamation to a packed hall there: "In the name of God, in the name of bygone generations who have welded the Indian people into one nation, and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice, we call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner and strike for India's freedom". He was overwhelmed with emotion while he took the oath to lead the freedom struggle till the last breath of his life.

Earlier in the year, on 4 July, the Cathay Cinema had witnessed another historic meeting. The veteran freedom fighter Rashbehari Bose had handed over to Netaji the leadership of the Azad Hind Movement. Netaji accepted the honour and the responsibility in a stirring speech in Hindustani. He said that on the day that India won freedom it would be for the people of India to decide what kind of government they wanted and who would lead them. For him personally, the only reward would be the liberation of his motherland.

The next day, 5 July, he stood at the Padang and took the salute of the Indian National Army. Standing on the steps of the Municipal Building he declared: "Today is the proudest day of my life. Today it has pleased Providence to give me the unique privilege and honor of announcing to the whole world that India's Army of Liberation has come

**Standing on the steps of the
Municipal Building he declared:
"Today is the proudest day of my life.
Today it has pleased Providence to
give me the unique privilege and
honour of announcing to the whole
world that India's Army of Liberation
has come into being."**



*5 July 1943. Bose salutes his INA troops as Maj Gen Mohammad Zaman Kiani looks on.
Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau.*

into being." On 6 July Japan's General Tojo stood by him and witnessed the military parade. Netaji addressed a huge public gathering on 9 July where he gave the call to all expatriate Indians in Southeast Asia for Total Mobilization. The slogan was: "Total Mobilization for a Total War". The civil population responded with great enthusiasm.

The day we visited Farrer Park in Singapore, we actually saw the cradle of the Azad Hind Movement. In February 1942, it was here that Major Fujiwara of the Japanese Army accepted the surrender of 45,000 British-Indian Army soldiers from their British commanding officer. In an unusual speech, Fujiwara declared that the soldiers would not be treated as prisoners of war; they could fight for their motherland's liberation from colonial rule. The first INA, however, did not last long. It was Netaji's arrival a year later that had an electrifying effect on the army as well as the civil population and a glorious chapter of India's freedom struggle unfolded in war-torn Singapore.

The other great achievement of Netaji in Singapore was the formation of the women's wing of the army, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. Netaji had envisaged it during his 93-day submarine journey from Europe to East Asia. He gave it shape under the leadership of Lakshmi Sahgal (nee Swaminathan), Janaki Athi Nahappan (nee Davar) and others soon after his arrival in Singapore. We were shown a two-storey house surrounded by a high wall where the first 300 recruits of the women's Regiment were housed and trained. The women of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment subsequently proved their courage and fortitude in difficult times.

Our Singaporean friends took us to the seashore, pointed to an empty space and said: "Here stood the Martyrs' Memorial." It had been Netaji's wish to erect a memorial to the unknown soldiers of the Indian National Army. He chose a place by the seaside and laid the foundation in July 1945. By the first week of September Colonel Cyril John Stracey of the INA built the Memorial there. On his arrival in Singapore, the first thing that Mountbatten did was to blow up the Memorial with dynamite. A very shocking act indeed; professional militaries normally do not show disrespect to enemy dead. But Mountbatten wished to humiliate the Indian patriots who had served in the Azad Hind Movement.

When the Memorial was blown up, the INA soldiers and civilians who had gathered there were overwhelmed with grief. A soldier

distraught with grief shouted, "Wah! Wah! you did this to us today, one day you will be blown up like that." Many INA officers recalled this incident when three decades later Mountbatten was assassinated in a bomb blast by the IRA.

The friendly government of Singapore built a small memorial at the spot later. Many visitors from India go and pay their respects there.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had arrived in Singapore on 2 July 1943. He left his Meyer Road residence for the last time on 16 August 1945. We retraced our steps on the Freedom Trail to Meyer Road, where he spent the last few days of his eventful sojourn in Singapore. Netaji was in Seremban when news reached him of the imminent surrender of Japan. Atom bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August. News also reached him that the Soviet Union had joined the war against Japan.

He drove back to Singapore and reached his Meyer Road home in the evening. Ayer accompanied him. In another car, Major Alagappan, Colonel Enayet Kiani and others followed. General Mohammad Zaman Kiani and Colonel Habibur Rahman joined them at the Cabinet meeting at the south facing verandah on the first floor. Raghavan, Thivy and Swami arrived from Malaysia. From the night of 12 August to the early morning of 16 August the cabinet was in session continuously. There were many important decisions to be taken.

Netaji's greatest concern was the safety of the women of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. He was also worried about the future of the young INA cadets who were in the Military Academy of Tokyo. The boys would be stranded there, he feared. But for the Cabinet the most difficult decision was planning where Netaji would move subsequently. Netaji himself wished to stay back in Singapore and surrender there with his army. But his colleagues thought that would be much too risky; the vengeful British would not spare Netaji's life. There was some discussion that he might go underground in Thailand and emerge later at a suitable time. But no final decision could be reached.

The Cabinet adjourned for some time on the evening of 14 August. Netaji went to see a drama performance by the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, on the life of Rani Lakshmibai of

It was in this house, on Meyer Road, that Netaji wrote the historic Proclamation of Independence through the night of 19 Oct 1943.

Photo by Krishna Bose





Netaji at the inauguration of the Boys' Home at the Ramakrishna Mission in Singapore in 1943.

Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau.

Jhansi, the heroine of the 1857 Revolt. The packed hall burst into applause when Netaji arrived. At the end of the performance all present sang the Indian national anthem.

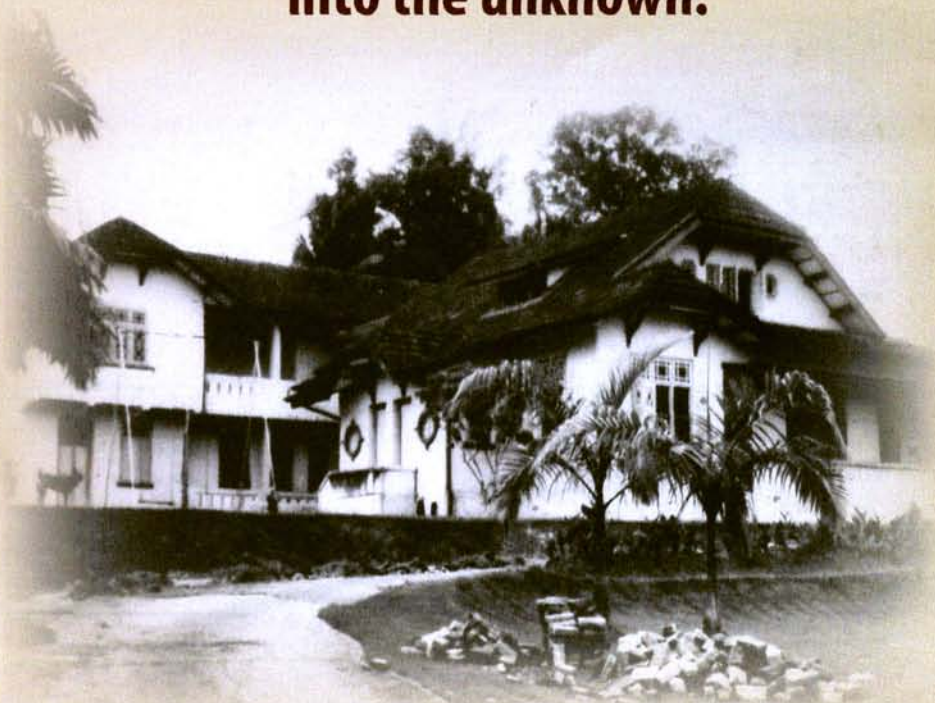
Japan formally surrendered on 15 August. In the morning, in the middle of the Cabinet meeting, Colonel Stracey arrived with the designs of the Martyrs' Memorial. Netaji approved one of the designs and enquired if the memorial could be erected before the Anglo-American forces arrived. "Certainly, Sir," Colonel Stracey replied and left after a smart salute. The others looked at Stracey with wonder mixed with disbelief.

During the deliberations on that day and the following night it was decided that Netaji would leave Singapore the next morning. Netaji left Singapore early in the morning of 16 August 1945 for what he himself described as "an adventure into the unknown." As his plane took off, the curtain came down on the saga of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Singapore.



Krishna Bose, distinguished academic and author of several books on Netaji, has been a three-term member of the Indian Parliament and chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee of External Affairs from 1999 to 2004. She is currently Chairperson of the Netaji Research Bureau, an Institute of International Affairs founded by her husband Sisir Kumar Bose at Netaji's ancestral house in Kolkata.

Netaji left Singapore early in the morning of 16 August 1945 for what he himself described as "an adventure into the unknown."



The INA Headquarters on Chancery Lane. Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau.

The Rani of Jhansi Regiment

JOYCE CHAPMAN LEBRA

Professor Emerita, University of Colorado

Dozens, then hundreds, of teenage girls from the rubber plantations of Malaya and Burma also volunteered – girls who had never seen India, yet eagerly gave their lives to Netaji and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

Singapore was electrified when Subhas Chandra Bose arrived first by German, then Japanese submarine in the summer of 1943. On 4 July he issued his stunning summons before a packed audience to all Indians in Southeast Asia to rise and join the struggle to free India from the bonds of British rule. His reputation for revolutionary political acts in India and his total dedication to the cause of liberating India had preceded him. Those who heard his sonorous call, not only in Singapore but in Malaya and Burma as well, were electrified and responded in the hundreds, then thousands. His appeal drew soldiers of the Indian National Army and civilians as well, all feeling the magic of his charisma and responding without hesitation.

The Indian National Army, though founded initially by a young Japanese major, Iwaichi Fujiwara, in cooperation with Mohan Singh of the British Indian Army, had languished when Mohan Singh encountered difficulty dealing with the Japanese occupiers after Fujiwara was posted elsewhere.

Netaji's battle cry was, "Chalo Delhil" and his stentorian voice reverberated with the words, "If you will always follow me in life as well as in death, then I will lead you on the road to victory and freedom."¹ Officers and men of the Indian National Army pledged their loyalty to Netaji and formed the nucleus of burgeoning numbers of the INA.

But Netaji had something more in mind for the female half of the population. At public meetings of 6 and 9 July, he revealed his pet project when he called on all Indian women to rise and, "complete the work the Great Rani undertook in 1857."² In invoking the name of the legendary Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi for his women's Regiment, he evoked many cultural themes and memories and reincarnated the historic Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi in the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. There was no way he felt that freedom could be won by

only half the population. His appeal met an instantaneous reception in the hearts and minds of young women as they responded to volunteer not only their own services but also, with the well-to-do, their gold jewelry.

The first woman to answer Netaji's call was Dr Swaminathan--coincidentally also named Lakshmi--a young medical doctor who had come to Singapore in 1940. The daughter of a prominent English-educated Madras barrister, she was already a nationalist and had heard Netaji's broadcasts from Tokyo soon after his arrival in Southeast Asia. After she heard him in Singapore, she met with two prominent community leaders and together they devised a surprise for Netaji. She managed to round up twenty women to create a guard of honour for the 12 July parade.

That morning (12 July) Netaji and the Indian residents of Singapore saw a remarkable sight: a women's guard of honour in white saris presenting arms to Netaji. He was thrilled. The Rani of Jhansi Regiment (RJR), he was certain, would inspire Indians everywhere, and he envisioned the RJR marching in the vanguard of the INA as they crossed the Burma border on to Indian soil.

Lakshmi was then called to Netaji's office, where she listened intently as he explained his goals, his opposition to the caste system and his aspirations for a multi-racial, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious India. He asked her if she would be willing to take command of the RJR and then if she needed time to consider. She did not need time, as her decision was already made. Totally energized, she launched into action the next day, provided with a staff car, office, and funds to begin recruitment.

Training began, with INA instructors and rifles in some cases captured by Japanese forces. Lakshmi was incensed when General Renya Mutaguchi, from a culture where women had no place in military tradition, asked her if women of the Regiment could actually fight. "Of course! What is required is



The Ranis of Bose's INA.

Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau.

Women Soldiers Of Rani Jhansi Regt. Eager To Fight Freedom Battle With Brothers-In-Arms

Syonan City, March 31 (Domei) — Eight months after the call by Netaji for the formation of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment in Syonan, the first batch of women warriors graduated yesterday afternoon at a grand passing-out parade held before thousands of Indians — members of the Azad Hind Fauj, civilians and schoolchildren.

It was indeed an epochal day — a Red Letter Day — in the history of the Jhansi Regiment. And no one displayed more patriotic fervour and zeal than the Commandant herself, Captain S. Lakshmi, as she appeared on the parade ground.

The Commandant, who also holds the high post of head of Women's Affairs in the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, attired in trim khaki uniform, reviewing the first soldiers of her own women's regiment, was charged with deep emotion and her face betrayed the happiness she felt.

Recently returned from the frontlines where she attended to official duties side by side with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the Commandant yesterday saw the realization of her fondest dreams and aspirations. She had just

ed with emotion as the Rani of Jhansi Regiment's first leader addressed the soldiers under her command.

Chatting amiably with all ranks during the function which followed the parade, Captain Lakshmi unassumingly poured out tea for brother officers of the I.N.A. who had come to witness their sister-soldiers' graduate.

"To-day is one of the happiest days in my life," she stated in between attending to official work. "I am proud to have been chosen as the leader of this woman's regiment which is named after that most illustrious heroine, Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi. We will show the British, our enemy, and the world at large that women of India are made of the same mettle as the men of the Azad Hind Fauj."

She concluded: "We women

Britishers In Grip Of

that the Indo-Nipponese military campaign is nothing more than some diversional operations and that, in any case, the

That morning (12 July) Netaji and the Indian residents of Singapore saw a remarkable sight: a women's guard of honour in white saris presenting arms to Netaji. He was thrilled.

17 July 1943
edition of the
Azad Hind
newspaper.



Propped on an easel is a photograph of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi, who was the inspiration for these brave young soldiers of Netaji's Rani of Jhansi Regiment. Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau.

**Now they had
a chance not
only to escape
monotony,
but...to
live with a
purpose and,
if necessary, to
die for a cause.**

training and discipline. We have both," she replied with spirit.³ Lakshmi then spent several weeks speaking at rallies in Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh, visiting reluctant well-do-do parents to convince them to allow their protected daughters to join the struggle. In Kuala Lumpur she recruited Janaki Davar and her sister, Papathi and in Ipoh she found Rasammah and Ponnammah Navarednam and others. Most of the officer corps of the RJR was drawn from this group of well-educated young women from Singapore, Malaya, and Burma. Lakshmi remarks of them, "There were quite a number of young women from comfortable homes, who in normal times would not have had any purpose in life and would have lived in refined and placid domesticity...Now they had a chance not only to escape monotony, but...to live with a purpose and, if necessary, to die for a cause," Lakshmi explains.⁴

The seeming anomaly was that dozens, then hundreds of teenage girls from the rubber plantations of Malaya and Burma also volunteered, girls who though they had never seen India, nevertheless eagerly dedicated their lives and perhaps deaths to Netaji and the RJR. Life on the rubber estates, it may be noted, was arduous. Moreover, these young women identified neither with the foreign rulers nor with the indigenous populace. With Netaji's added multi-faceted appeal, they gained a sense of identity, not only as Indians, but as Indians with the goal of liberating India. For all these women, whether educated or not, youth was a time for idealism and adventure. As many as a thousand embraced the opportunity.

When Janaki Davar heard Netaji speak at a rally in Kuala Lumpur, she hastened to the podium and was the first to remove her gold earrings and place them at his feet, and others soon followed suit. At home she worried that her mother would notice that she was without her jewelry, but her father defended her against her mother's wrath, and Janaki persuaded her parents to invite Lakshmi to tea. Janaki joined the regiment and rose to be the second in command of the RJR and played a crucial role in the training of troops and during the retreat from Rangoon.

Rasammah Navarednam, who signed up in Ipoh with two sisters, explains her motivation. "We were already psychologically and emotionally and intellectually prepared. You had the desire to be part of this great movement for

freedom of one's country...I wanted to die for India."⁵

Training of the RJR was rigorous and gruelling. Military drill and weapons training were part of a daily regiment that began at 6 a.m. Weapons included rifles, hand grenades, bren guns, tommy guns, pistols, mortars, anti-aircraft guns and bayonets. In the afternoon INA officers gave lectures on military history. Route marches at night, carrying backpacks, were part of the curriculum. In the evening the girls organized variety shows and plays, including one written and produced by Lakshmi, entitled "Freedom of Death."

In December 1943, Netaji moved the headquarters of both the INA and the Free India Provisional Government to Rangoon, and he called on Lakshmi to open a camp for the RJR in Thingangyun, a Rangoon suburb. Instructors and nurses were part of the Rangoon contingent of the RJR. They travelled overland, partly on the Thai-Rangoon Railway, the notorious "death railway." Lakshmi also established a branch of the Indian Independence League to recruit civilian volunteers to collect hospital supplies, and dry rations for troops. Training for the Ranis intensified in Burma and included firing live ammunition.

On 30 March 1944, the passing out parade of RJR officers was held, and the eight officers who had passed the INA officers' test were commissioned, making the RJR officially a part of the INA. In April 1944, the first unit of the RJR moved 600 miles further north to the new headquarters of both the INA and Free India Provisional Government at Maymyo. On 15 April Lakshmi left for Rangoon with two other officers and six other ranks by truck convoy, sleeping in trucks at villages en route.

On the evening of 3 May, the RJR barracks were bombed and reduced to rubble. The women had heard the bombers and rushed out to their air raid shelter, enabling all to survive. The Enfield rifles were too heavy for slightly-built Tamil girls and were by this time replaced by lighter Canadian or Dutch rifles captured by the Japanese in Indonesia.

The major part of the history of the RJR occurred between March 1944 and August 1945, when the war ended. By this time and even earlier the INA and Japanese troops were on the defensive, unable to push back British Indian troops who had air

Janaki led RJR troops on an epic 26-day retreat through the jungles of Burma and Thailand, initially on a goods train, but when it was bombed, slogging through the mud and jungles on foot.



The Rani of Jhansi Regiment, the first women's army in Asia. Janaki in front row, first woman from right. Photo: Courtesy Janaki Nahappan.

cover and superior supply lines. Heavy INA casualties coming into hospitals from the front occupied nurses and even troops of the RJR. Added to these logistic problems was the weather factor, when monsoon rains rendered the jungles nearly impassable and infested with leeches and snakes.

Lakshmi and others were eager to join their INA brothers on the front lines, and with four others she appealed to Netaji with a petition signed in their own blood. By this time, however, the retreat south from Maymyo had begun.

When Netaji announced the retreat to the RJR, many made agonized protests. "No, I don't want to go back. I want to fight for India," Janaki said to Netaji. Retreat, however, was unavoidable. Janaki commanded RJR troops on an epic 26-day retreat through the jungles of Burma and Thailand, initially on a goods train, but when it was bombed, slogging through the mud and jungles on foot. They carried heavy backpacks and often went without food. "Going is heavy, we are night birds," Janaki recorded in her diary. "There are plenty of guerrilla troops in the area and we must be prepared to fight."⁶

Netaji accompanied the 500 girls on the long march, and Janaki felt she had to take care of him, as he was heedless of his own welfare and health. During the train journey of the march, two girls were killed when the train was attacked, the only fatalities suffered by the RJR. Rather than join the march back, Lakshmi told Netaji she preferred to go where she could be of service, and her story continues at a hospital in

Kalaw and other points for several more months in Burma.

At one point when she and two others were captured by Japanese forces and tied to a tree, she expected to be executed. Instead, she was saved when a Japanese officer recognized her from a photograph in a magazine and ordered her released. She survived to continue her medical practice and to work for the welfare of veterans and women in Kanpur, India. In 2002 she ran on the CPIM ticket for president of India, not with the expectation of winning but to ensure that Indians never forget the contribution of the INA and RJR to independent India. She continues to stress passionately that the Rani of Jhansi Regiment fought not only to liberate India from foreign rule but also to free women from subjugation to men.

In his revolutionary summons to battle to all Indian women in Southeast Asia, Netaji encapsulated many echoes and cultural elements: reverence for the Cosmic Mother and Bharat Mata, belief in the cosmic female power of Shakti, faith in the plethora of mother goddesses, the appeal of the symbol of martyrdom in the shedding of blood, and the agency of gender.

The fact that rumours of Netaji's survival as a *sannyasi* (ascetic) somewhere in Asia abound and that India will not allow the Netaji legend to die is a recognition that what he, the INA and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment fought for is still vitally relevant for India today. This legacy stands as a model of equality and harmony for Indian democracy.

NOTES

1. Major General AC Chatterji, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, Calcutta: Chuckerverty Chatterji, 1947, p. 75. Much of the discussion presented here derives from two publications by Joyce Chapman Lebra: *The Indian National Army and Japan*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008 reprint; and *Women Against the Raj: The Rani of Jhansi Regiment*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008.
2. Subhas Chandra Bose, *Testament of Subhas Bose: Being a Complete and Authentic Record of Netaji's Broadcasts, Speeches, Press Statements, etc.*, Delhi: Rajkamal Publications, 1946, pp. 193-194; Rohini Gawankar, *The Women's Regiment and Captain Lakshmi of INA*, New Delhi: Devika Publications, 2003, p. 162.
3. Interview with Lakshmi Sahgal, Kanpur, 23 March 2007; also see Lakshmi Sahgal, *A Revolutionary Life: Memoirs of a Political Activist*, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1997.
4. Sahgal, *A Revolutionary Life*, pp. 141-142.
5. Interview with Rasammah Bhupalan, Kuala Lumpur, 17 April, 2007. See also Aruna Gopinath, *Footprints on the Sands of Time: A Life of Purpose*, Kuala Lumpur: Arkib Negara Malaysia, 2007.
6. Peter Ward Fay, *Forgotten Army: India's Armed Struggle for Independence*, Ann Arbor: Univ of Michigan Press, 1993, p. 373.



Professor Joyce Chapman Lebra has taught the history of Japan, India, and Asia-Pacific women at the University of Colorado. She is the author of 14 works of non-fiction and fiction and has lectured widely around the world.

A Rani on Horseback

Conversations with Datin Janaki Athi Nahappan

Captain Janaki's still vivid memories bring her days in the Rani of Jhansi Regiment to life.

An interview by NILANJANA SENGUPTA.

INTERVIEW

Janaki would ride on horseback from the RJR camp at Helpin Road to the army hospital at Mingaladon, around 15 miles away.

One day Netaji stopped her enroute and said, "Ms Davar, let me show you a few things about good horsemanship."

Datin Janaki Athi Nahappan, still fondly called Captain Janaki by her old acquaintances, lives not far away from the steel and glass spires of the Petronas Towers. Yet the flow of contemporary life seems to have left her house largely untouched. The Datin, at 86, lives her life surrounded by Netaji memorabilia: an old portrait of Netaji flanked by AC Chatterjee, MZ Kiani and Habibur Rahman stands with her family photographs, a glass mural of the Rani of Jhansi adorns her living room wall and the mention of the leader's name never fails to bring an unexpected rush of tears to her eyes. She browses through dusty volumes of sepia toned photographs and as she does so, images of a bygone era unfold, an era when patriotism was palpable, awakening the Indian community to new convictions and challenges...

member. A second generation migrant to Malaya, Janaki had never seen India (and would not visit India till November 2000, when she went to collect the Padma Shri conferred on her by the Indian President) and yet the country came alive in the word-pictures so deftly drawn by Bose. Emotionally moved, Janaki raised her fist to the cries of "Bharat mata ki jai!" and went up to the raised platform where Bose and Captain Lakshmi were seated. She was the first woman to respond to the INA's call and next morning's papers carried the news of her donating her personal jewellery to the cause. Huge posters lined Ampang Street or Chetty Street (as it was then called because of the Chettians living there) of Kuala Lumpur. Other women signed-up thereafter – Buddhist Josephine and Christian Stella who came from Rifle Range and would die an early death during the retreat; Anjalay who joined from the Senthul district of Kuala Lumpur; Ahilandam, born of a Chinese mother and an Indian father who sent her 10-year-old daughter away to caregivers in Madurai before enlisting as a Rani. Janaki had unwittingly pioneered a trend.

The Rani of Jhansi Camp in Singapore:

Janaki and her sister Papathi moved to the Rani of Jhansi Camp on Waterloo Street in Singapore, much to the dismay of their family. They would spend the next six months here in intensive military training, preparing for the onward march to the Indo-Burma border battlefield. Camp life for these girls, brought up in relative luxury in an upper-middle class household, was not easy. They lived in *attap* sheds, slept on narrow wooden planks and had no blanket or pillow till an uncle living in Singapore brought them these little amenities. Breakfast

Joining the Rani of Jhansi Regiment:

Janaki was 18 when one afternoon in July 1943 she stole to the Selangor Padang to hear Subhas Chandra Bose. It was a large gathering of mostly Indians – plantation workers squatted on the ground in front while the women stood at a diffident distance. Netaji arrived in an open car with two outriders at the front and spoke in Hindustani which was largely incomprehensible to this young girl, though she eagerly heard the Tamil interpretation of the speech by Mr Chidambaram, a senior League

Photo: Courtesy Janaki Nahappan



Captain Janaki Davar.

was an unappetizing helping of *ragi* while the *langar* commanders dished up something equally unappealing for the other meals of the day. Every afternoon the girls travelled in open trucks to the Bidadari Camp for their military training and would return only in the evening. Yet, despite the obvious discomforts, they did not take long to get accustomed to camp life – at night they would get together to sing patriotic songs and soon forged new ties of friendship.

Under orders of Netaji, no male was allowed entry into their camp – the sentries at the front gate were female and so were the visiting doctors. Female tailors came in the initial days to fit out the girls in their new uniforms. Each camp resident received two sets – one was full length for formal occasions while the other set consisted of shorts and half sleeved shirts. The uniforms in the beginning were a plain khaki and the INA tri-colour bands were added only later. Janaki recalls the initial hesitation of her camp colleagues to wear the uniform and walk the streets of Singapore for their route marches. It was Netaji's words of encouragement which helped them persist, despite the jeering crowds at Bras Basah Road.

While at Singapore, Janaki and the girls gave a performance at the Cathay Theatre. Janaki played herself – a young girl leaving home to join the nationalist cause. As the girls sang '*Kadam kadam badaye ja*' (March together towards victory) and donations for the INA poured in, what mattered most to Janaki

was the applause she received from Netaji.

Last days in Singapore:

Janaki returned to Singapore in August 1945 after the gruelling retreat from Burma – she and her group of girls had walked for 26 days under constant enemy fire to reach Moulmein and then taken a goods train to Thailand. Netaji had been with them every step of the way, walking at the head of the column. During the last year and a half they had seen life at its worst in war-torn Rangoon. The Ranis had nursed the few

surviving INA soldiers when the British bombed the army hospital at Myang. They had travelled in a goods train and taken refuge in leech infested paddy fields, been bullied by the communist guerrilla and spent nights huddled in way-side schools and villages during the return journey. Janaki led her platoon of girls to safety and ensured they reached their homes in different towns in Malaya. By the time she reached Singapore, the Japanese had surrendered and Netaji was preparing to leave on yet another undisclosed journey. Janaki recalls: "He gave me a signed copy of his photograph and said, 'Don't worry, Janaki. The British will never get me - dead or alive.' That was the last time she saw him.

Janaki considers Netaji as one of the greatest leaders till date, "who worked more than anyone else" and to whose call she would not hesitate to respond even today.

Ahilandam (left), born of a Chinese mother and an Indian father, sent her 10-year-old daughter away to caregivers in Madurai before being recruited as a Rani. Janaki had pioneered a trend.



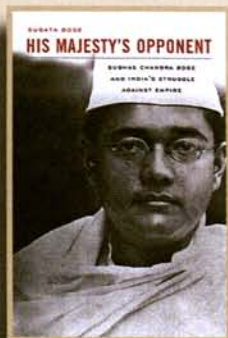
Nilanjana Sengupta is the author of the forthcoming book A Gentleman's Word: The Legacy of Subhas Chandra Bose in Southeast Asia. She has been a freelance feature writer for several leading Indian dailies and is now Visiting Research Fellow at ISEAS.



*Janaki leading the Guard of Honour for Aung San and his wife.
Photo: Courtesy Janaki Nahappan.*



Photo: Courtesy Janaki Nahappan



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Speeches from the Singapore launch of the book appear on pp. 10-11 of this volume.

Roads to Delhi

SUGATA BOSE

Gardiner Professor of Oceanic History and Affairs, Harvard University

Upon his return to Singapore on 25 November 1943, Netaji plunged into the final preparations for the march towards India. In the second week of December he made a final swing through Indonesia to garner the support of Indians based in Jakarta and Surabaya on the island of Java as well as those living in Borneo and Sumatra. This tour completed Bose's attempt to reach Indians living in nearly all parts of Japanese-occupied Asia.

While Japan was clearly the colonial aggressor in Northeast Asia with a dark record of oppression in Korea and China, the situation in Southeast Asia was more complex. Even here the Chinese in Malaya and Singapore felt the brunt of Japan's wartime brutalities. Yet in this vast region Japan had also played an instrumental role in defeating and destroying the mystique of Western imperial powers – the British in Burma and Malaya, the French in Indo-China, the Dutch in the East Indies, and the Americans in the Philippines. In Indo-China the Japanese found it expedient to work with the Vichy French and shifted too late in 1945 to supporting some Vietnamese nationalists. This enabled the communists in the Viet Minh to adopt the nationalist mantle. Elsewhere, the Japanese supported Asian nationalists to a greater or lesser degree. The Indians, the Burmese, the Indonesians and some Malays and Filipinos took advantage of the Japanese undermining of Western colonial authority to advance their own independence movements.

In Indonesia Mohammad Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta had been released from long years in Dutch prisons by the Japanese. They accepted Japanese help to build their civilian administration and train their military between 1942 and 1945. Even though the Indonesian proclamation of independence did not come until August 1945, wartime developments would make a Dutch reconquest of Indonesia as difficult as

the re-assertion of British colonial rule in Burma. That Japan had undermined the British and other Western colonial powers in Southeast Asia was what mattered to Bose, despite the deplorable Japanese aggression towards the Chinese and other Asians.

Bose's provisional government extended its protective umbrella over Indians living in all these lands. It obtained *de jure* control over a piece of Indian territory when the Japanese handed over the Andaman and Nicobar islands in late December 1943, even though *de facto* military control was not relinquished by the Japanese admiralty. Bose redeemed his rash promise of setting foot on Indian soil before the year's end by arriving in Port Blair on 29 December 1943, for a three-day visit to these islands. As usual his visit was steeped with symbolism. The British had imprisoned some of India's greatest revolutionaries in the notorious Cellular Jail on the Andaman island where many had spent a rigorous life sentence and not a few had been sent to the gallows. Netaji paid tribute to the revolutionaries who had suffered there and likened the opening of the gates of Cellular Jail to the liberation of the Bastille. He hoisted the Indian tricolour at the Gymkhana grounds in Port Blair to the singing of the national anthem. Before his departure he renamed Andaman as 'Shaheed' ('Martyrs') and Nicobar as 'Swaraj' ('Freedom') islands.¹ During a visit to Bangkok a few days later he appointed AD Logonadan the Chief Commissioner of these islands. The Thais, Hugh Toye writes, were "at their best, charming, hospitable, generous, eager to do honour to one who, none dared doubt, would soon march invincibly into India".²

Before the close of 1943, Netaji's secret agents had already reached Calcutta. Soon after his arrival in Singapore, he had felt the need for a wireless link with Bengal. The spies that the Japanese

had sent into India had not been very successful. Bose tried to assert control over intelligence operations based in Penang and Rangoon and put NG Swami in charge of what came to be called the Azad School. Four well-trained intelligence operatives – Bhagwan Lu, Harbans Lal, Kanwal Singh and Kartar Singh – had accompanied Swami on the journey from Europe to Asia on the blockade runner, *SS Osorno*, in March 1943. Bose, Swami and Hasan now put these four together with another four trained in Penang and dispatched this group of eight under the leadership of SN Chopra towards India on board a Japanese submarine on 8 December 1943.³

The group landed with their sophisticated wireless equipment, weapons and money on the Kathiawar coast of Gujarat on the night of 22-23 December 1943. They were instructed to split into four pairs and head towards Bengal, the North-West Frontier, the United Provinces in northern India, and Bombay. Late in December, Bhagwan Lu under the cover of his pseudonym TK Rao, called at Woodburn Park in Calcutta to see Sisir Kumar Bose, the nephew who had driven Subhas during his January 1941 escape. After a spell in prison for taking part in the Quit India movement, Sisir was then home-interned with permission to travel to Medical College for his studies. The family was in mourning as Prabhavati, the matriarch, had just passed away. Rao handed Sisir a handwritten message in Bengali from Subhas on the letterhead of the Indian Independence League at 3, Chancery Lane in Singapore dated "Sri Sri Kali Puja" 29 October 1943, the day of the worship of the mother goddess Kali. Subhas had told Sarat and Sisir that his messages in Bengali would be genuine, while those in English might be intended to mislead the British. Both Sisir and his mother Bivabati recognized Subhas's handwriting. Sisir then put Rao in touch with those members of the underground organization Bengal Volunteers who had managed to stay out of prison.⁴

In January 1944, radio contact was successfully established between Calcutta and Subhas Chandra Bose in Burma. One of the earliest messages transmitted did not contain any valuable military intelligence. It conveyed the news of Prabhavati's death. "You look tired," Debnath Das said to Netaji that evening. "No, I am not tired," Bose replied. "I heard today that I have lost my mother."⁵



Netaji strides out of the notorious British Cellular Jail in the Andamans in 1943. He likened the opening of the gates of the jail to the storming of the Bastille. Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau.

NOTES

1. "Netaji in Andaman, 29-31 December 1943: A Report" in *The Oracle*, 16, no. 1, January 1994, pp. 11-13.
2. Hugh Toye, *The Springing Tiger: A Study of Subhas Chandra Bose*, London: Cassell, 1959, p. 100.
3. "Statement of Kartar Singh" File No. 276/INA (NAI); Toye, *The Springing Tiger*, pp. 87-88; KK Ghosh, *The Indian National Army: Second Front of the Indian Independence Movement*, Meerut: Meenakshi, 1969, pp. 160-161.
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5. Sisir Kumar Bose, *Bosubari*, p. 159.

Subhas had told Sarat and Sisir that his messages in Bengali would be genuine, while those in English might be intended to mislead the British.



A Glimpse into History

Archival research by Jayati Bhattacharya, Kyaw San Wai, Lu Caixia

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's stirring declaration of the establishment of *Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind* or the Provisional Government of Free India in 1943 at Singapore's Cathay Cinema (see the photograph below) was reported extensively by the media of the time. Singapore, at the centre of Bose's wartime activities, possesses a rich archive of documents, photographs, letters, newspaper clippings, oral history records, propaganda leaflets and other data, which illuminate Bose's efforts to free India from colonial rule.

The NSC team, assisted by the National Archives of Singapore and the Netaji Research Bureau, Kolkata, has trawled through a wide range of archival records to put together a portrait of that tumultuous moment in history.



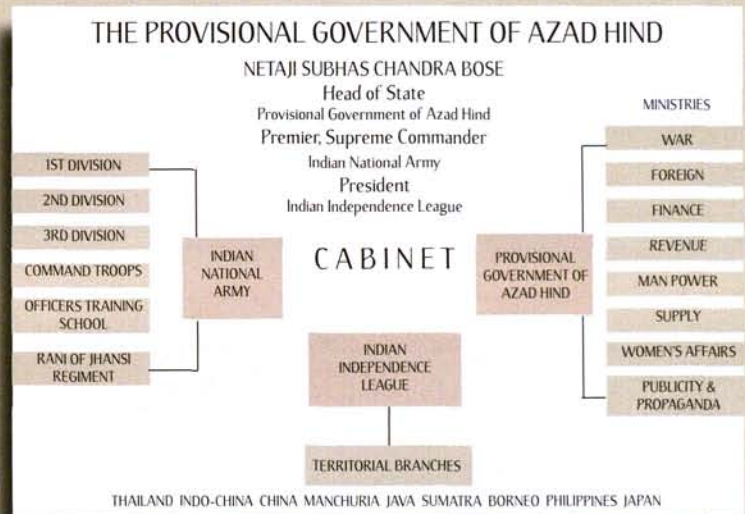
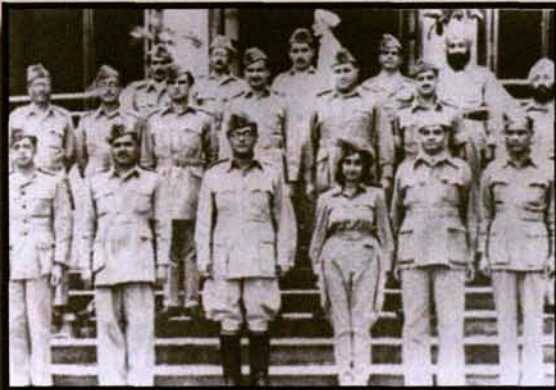
21 October 1943, Subhas Chandra Bose proclaimed the formation of the Provisional Government of Free India at Singapore's Cathay Cinema. Photo: Courtesy ISEAS Library.

Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind

The government of Azad Hind had its own currency, court and civil code, which provided credibility to its struggle against the British. But it lacked any sovereign territory. However, once it gained control of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands from Japan in 1943, and came to occupy parts of Manipur and Nagaland, it possessed the main elements required for a legitimate government.

Although the movement did not survive the death of Subhas Chandra Bose, the tide of nationalism it inspired contributed very substantially to India's independence.

Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau

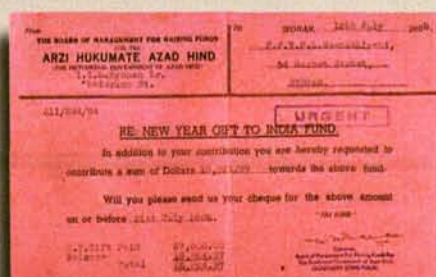


Based on SA Ayer's Unto Him a Witness

Bose's Cabinet: The Provisional Government of Free India had its own Cabinet (photograph above) with Bose as Head of State. The various ministries and the departments they oversaw were clearly structured. Lt Col AC Chatterjee was Minister of Finance while Dr Lakshmi Swaminathan was Minister in charge of Women's Organizations, besides being in charge of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. SA Ayer looked after broadcasting and publicity.



"By early April 1944, the Azad Hind government was issuing postage stamps (above left) for use in the liberated zones, and was printing sample currency notes (above right). If anything, Bose's plans for postwar reconstruction in India had run ahead of successful implementation of a war strategy." – Prof Sugata Bose, *His Majesty's Opponent* (p. 273). Allegedly a ship carrying the stamps printed in Germany was torpedoed on its way to Japan. Images: Courtesy Herbert A. Friedman



There was also an Azad Hind Bank, capitalized at several million rupees from donations by wealthy Indians, evidence of which exists in receipts like the ones on the left. Images: Courtesy Herbert A. Friedman

Syonan Days, INA, and the Press

Newspaper articles published in Singapore and Malaya over the period of 1941 to 1945 in English, Chinese, Japanese and Tamil reflected the socio-political environment of the time, highlighting the alliances, the declaration of war and the contests in different battle zones during the Japanese Occupation and through the duration of the War. During the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, or Syonan as it was then called, the Japanese had absolute control over the press and the radio. *The Straits Times* was renamed *The Syonan Times* and was published by the Syonan Shimbun-kai, with a morning Japanese edition and an English edition in the afternoon. The Japanese edition, priced at five cents, was initially called the *Syonan Sinbun*, and a year later, the *Syonan Shimbun*. A Chinese edition came out under the name *Syonan Jit Pau*, while a Malay edition was called the *Berita Malai*. Another Malay edition, the *Malai Sinpo*, was published from Kuala Lumpur.

Azad Hind, the mouthpiece of the Indian Independence League, was in circulation from February 1942, and provides interesting information on sources of funding for the INA. The numerous advertisements suggest robust support from Indian businesses in Singapore. A Tamil edition of *Azad Hind* circulated within the Tamil community. These newspapers are useful historical sources for understanding Subhas Chandra Bose's sojourn in Singapore, as well as the nature of his engagement with Japan, Asia and the world.

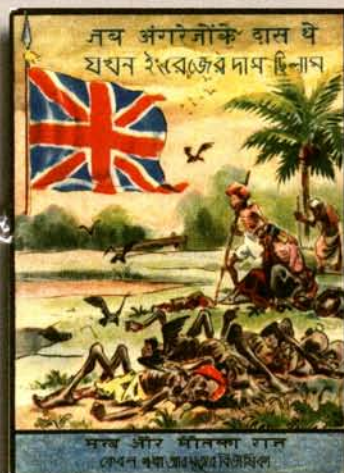


Newspaper images: Courtesy ISEAS Library.

Propaganda leaflets

To recruit men and women into the INA in Southeast Asia, the Indian Independence League and the INA distributed leaflets to the Indian community to highlight British colonial exploitation. At the same time, the Japanese also ran their own propaganda campaign which sought to instigate Indian troops to rise up against the Allied powers, the British in particular.

Right: This Japanese leaflet shows an angry Indian soldier bayoneting a British soldier. The text, in Hindi, Bengali and Urdu reads: "Use your weapons against the tyrannical Englishmen. The Indian National Army is coming. Join them and march towards New Delhi!"



The leaflet above shows two scenes in India: on the left is death and destruction after Indians have gone to war for the British and on the right the happiness and prosperity that would result were Indians to refuse to fight for the Allied forces.

The Japanese designers of this leaflet had scant knowledge of an Indian lifestyle accounting for the incongruities in the depiction. The text, in Hindi and Bengali, reads:

"As slaves of the British – Hunger and Death rule.

After independence – Happiness and Peace rule."



Above: Another Japanese anti-British leaflet that shows an English couple feasting while Indians lie dead on the floor. The text in Hindi and Bengali reads:

"Kill all the British who are sucking Indian blood."

Above: This Indian Independence League cartoon shows Churchill riding on the back of an Indian soldier who is killing his own people and walking on the fallen body of Mahatma Gandhi, while Roosevelt stands in the background, collecting money. Part of the text in Hindi reads:

"All the wealth of the British is yours – which has been stolen from you. Snatch all of your money and wealth from the British. The British are looting India using Indians."



All images: Courtesy Herbert A. Friedman

The brave young men and women who fought for India's freedom

These young men, women and boys gave their lives, their youth, their homes, their savings, for a homeland some had never seen. The valour displayed by INA soldiers in Southeast Asia inspired innumerable Indians. Nilanjana Sengupta spoke with some of these valiant men and women whose memories of their days in the INA have never faded.

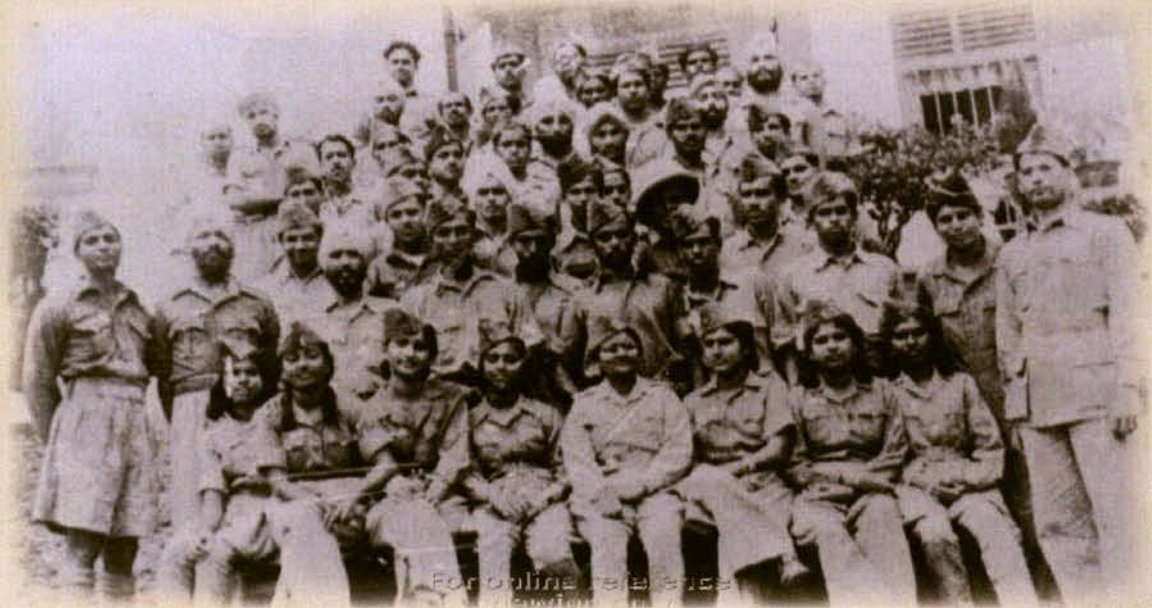


Photo: Courtesy Janaki Nahappan



In August 1945 after the gruelling retreat from Burma, Captain Janaki and her group of girls had walked for 26 days under constant enemy fire to reach Singapore. They had travelled in a goods train, taken refuge in leech-infested paddy fields, were hounded by Communist guerrillas, spending nights huddled in wayside schools and villages. Despite these odds, Janaki led her platoon of girls to safety and ensured that they reached their homes in Malaya.

Janaki Davar was 18 when she was stirred by Netaji's speech and joined the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.
Photo: Courtesy Janaki Nahappan



Lakshmi Swaminathan was a well-established and successful gynaecologist in Singapore when she gave up her thriving practice to lead the troops of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.
Photo: Courtesy Netaji Research Bureau



Right: Balak Sena, the youth wing of the INA. According to Bala Chandran, this photograph of the Balak Sena was presented to Pandit Nehru when he visited Singapore in 1946. Photo: Courtesy Kishore Bhattacharya.



Left: Then and now, Ramiah (in dark trousers) and Ponnampalam. Ponnampalam remembers seeing Indian men being taken away in trucks to work on the treacherous Siam-Burma railway. When the Japanese invaded, he signed up for the INA. He was only 16. Ramiah remembers the day the train that he was in charge of was attacked near Johore and all the military supplies stolen.

Photo: Madan Kunnavakkam



The young boys of the Balak Sena were trained to infiltrate the British Indian Army and gather intelligence at the Indo-Burma border. Photo: Courtesy Ramiah



Above left: Kishore Bhattacharya with his uncle CD Bhattacharya (seated). In their family, the older generation joined the INA and the younger generation the Balak Sena. Photo: Courtesy Kishore Bhattacharya

*Above right: Kishore Bhattacharya with filmmaker Shyam Benegal at the ISEAS-sponsored screening of *Bose The Forgotten Hero* in 2010 at the Cathay Cinema. "I wept through the entire film," the INA veteran told reporters after the screening. Photo: Courtesy Kishore Bhattacharya*



Memories of the INA

**"When Bose came, I walked
10 miles to hear him speak"**

— INA veteran Kishore Bhattacharya

"Those days our spirits were different you know. We happily survived on a daily breakfast of soya beans fried in vegetable oil and a lunch of soya beans and ubi. We just wanted to see a free India."

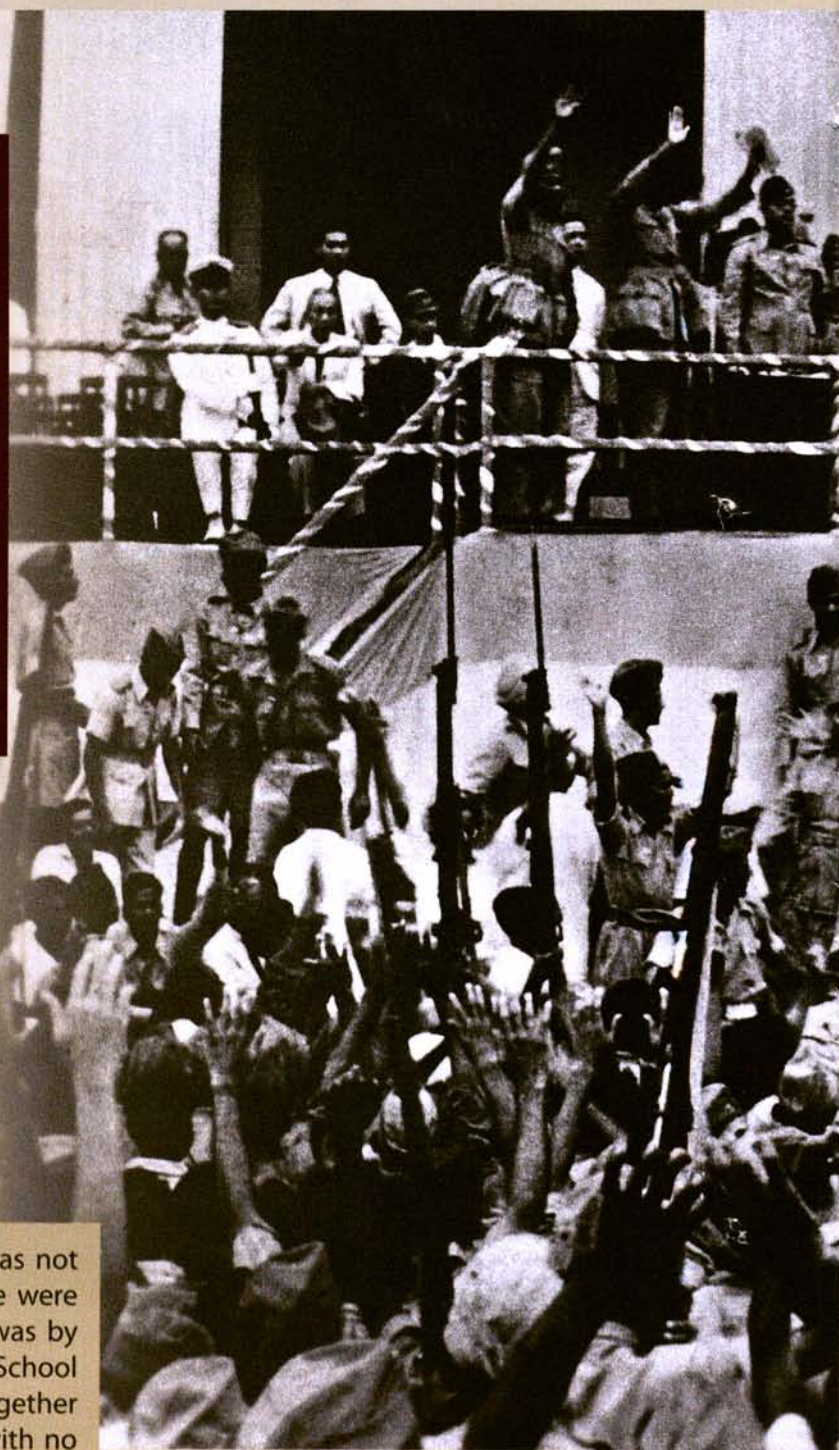
— *Girish Kothari*

"I didn't know Hindi so I caught only a few words from Netaji's rousing speech but I was still moved to tears. That night I could not go to sleep. I knew I had to do something.

The next morning I was at the INA headquarters to join the Balak Sena, the youth wing. I was 14."

— *Bala Chandran*

"Camp life was rigorous and well-organized. There was not a free moment to laze around. At a time when there were rampant food shortages in town, food in the camp was by and large good and sufficient. At the Officer Training School we stayed in dormitories where 40 to 50 cadets slept together on the floor with a thin cotton mattress and sheet, with no pillow." — *Girish Kothari*



Bose's rally at the Padang in Singapore on 5 July 1943.

“During our INA days we were exposed to the writings of Bernard Shaw and Karl Marx and to the ideals of the Fabian Society and the American and French Revolution[s]. At the Officer Training School we attended history lessons on the Indian Independence struggle and learnt about great leaders.”

– INA veteran Girish Kothari

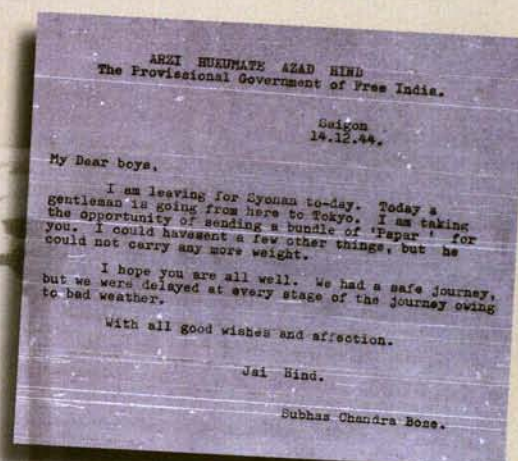


Photo: Courtesy ISEAS Library

In this letter addressed to “My Dear Boys”, Bose writes about sending “a bundle of ‘Papar’ (or poppadums from Bengal)” for the cadets in Tokyo. In another letter, he wrote: “I look forward to the happy day when you will return to India – it will be AZAD HIND when you return – as full-fledged Soldiers and as guardians of India’s independence.”

– Copy of letter: Courtesy the National Archives of Singapore

“There was an Indian family in our kampong – they sold their house and donated all their possessions to the INA. All the members joined. The two young daughters joined RJR, one of whom I saw later playing the drum at the head of the women’s march. I passed the RJR HQ a number of times at Waterloo Street and noticed that even the sentry at the gate of the camp was a lady. The RJR women visited the Kampong on Sundays in their natty uniforms. The elderly men and women of the Kampong didn’t like that at first.” – Bala Chandran

“The Balak Sena School held regular classes with emphasis on Indian history. I played the role of Shahid Bhagat Singh’s second-in-command in a play staged by the Balak Sena. The play became famous and we would be invited for performances to other camps like Seletar and Bidadari camps. We would all travel in lorries.

I remember going for morning runs down Stevens Road and Balmoral Road.”

– Bala Chandran

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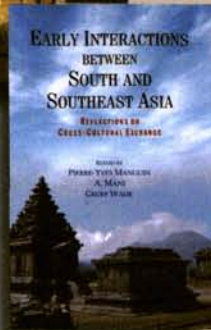
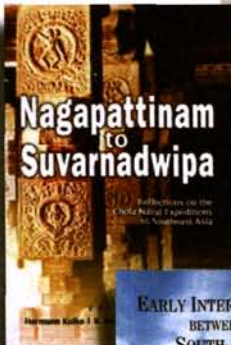
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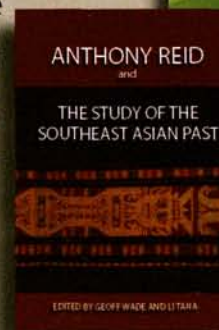
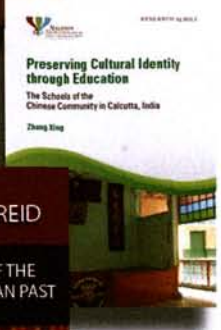


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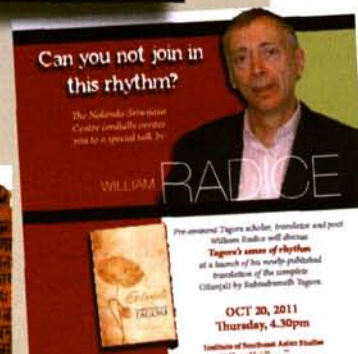
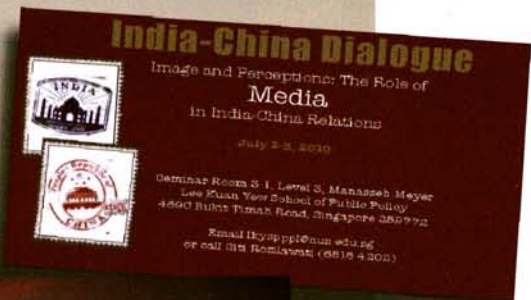
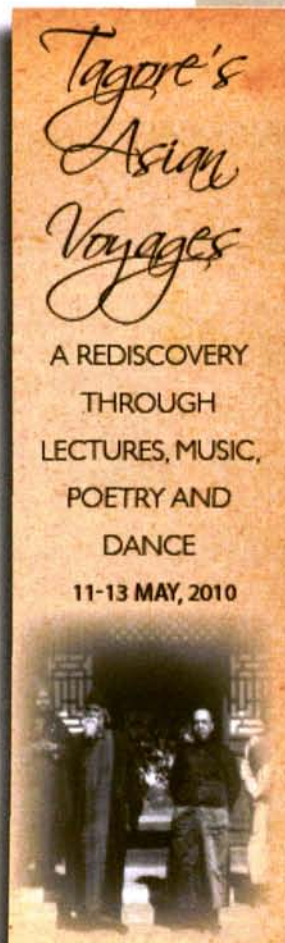


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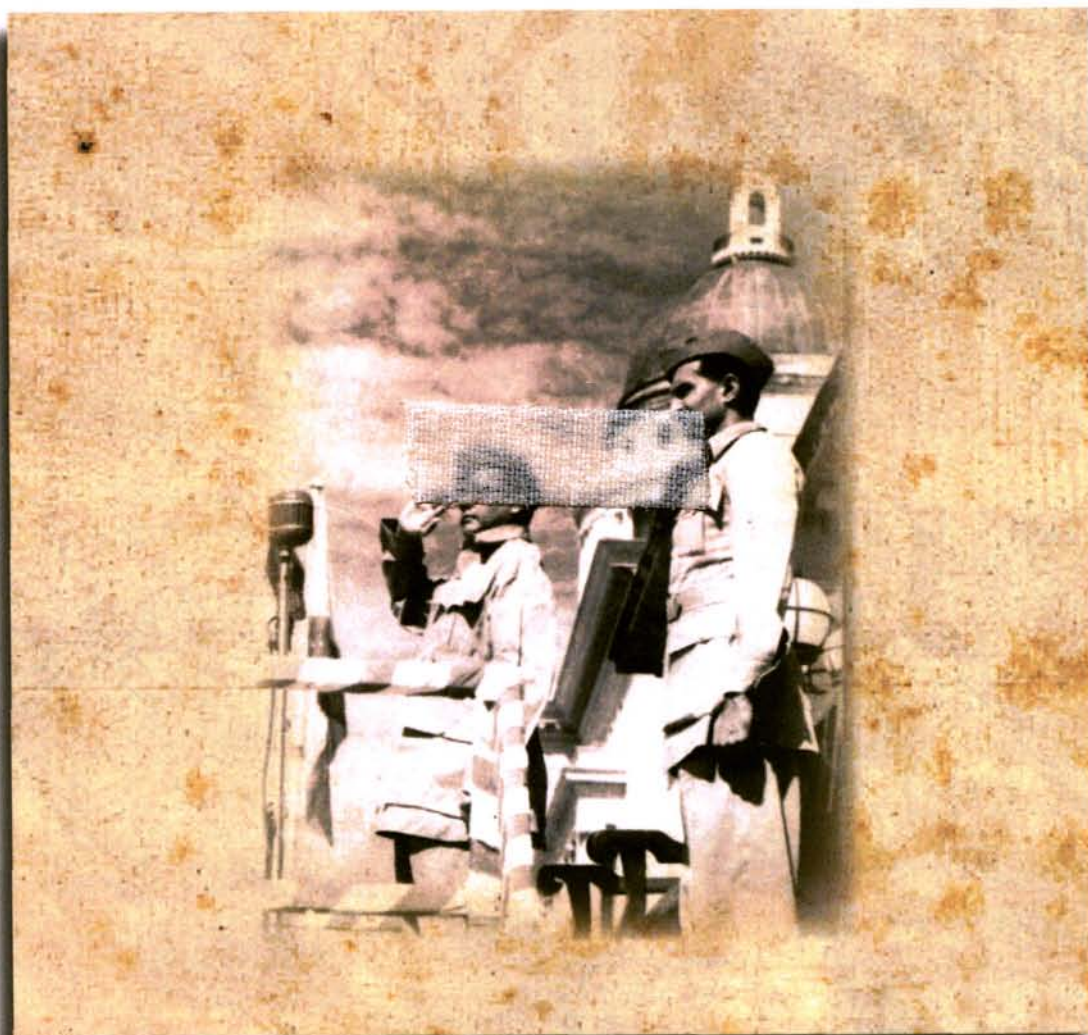
The Singapore Saga

Rare film footage
and audio
recordings of Netaji
in Singapore and
Burma



With kind permission from the Netaji Research Bureau, Kolkata







NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

The Singapore Saga

Selected writings, rare photographs, oral history and archival documents on Subhas Chandra Bose and Singapore's role in the struggle for India's freedom.